

Conditions of Work and Employment Programme

***Designing programmes to improve working and employment  
conditions in the informal economy:  
A literature review***

**Dr. Richard D. Rinehart**

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## Glossary of selected terms

BC	Business centres
BDS	Business development services
CVHW	Community volunteer health workers (Philippines)
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour, ILO
IRI	Interactive radio instruction
LGUs	Local government units
MSE	Micro and small enterprises
MSE/IE	Micro and small enterprises and the informal economy
NGO	Non-government organization
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
OSH	Occupational safety and health
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PSA	Public service announcement
SE	Small enterprise
SEED	Infocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development Programme, ILO
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association (India)
SIMPOC	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
TRAVAIL	Conditions of Work and Employment Programme, ILO
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WIDE	Work improvement and development of enterprise
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing
WIND	Work improvement in neighbourhood development
WISE	Work improvement in small enterprises

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## Foreword

The informal economy and small-scale businesses account for a substantial majority of working men and women in developing countries. Many of these workers endure some of the worst working and employment conditions in the global workforce. Their poor working conditions are closely related to, and contribute to, vulnerability and poverty. The ILO is working (spurred by a Resolution of the International Labour Conference in June 2002 concerning decent work and the informal economy) to tackle the multiple challenges posed by the continued growth of the informal economy. This effort requires us to challenge the popular but mistaken belief that improving workers' protection and working conditions in the informal economy must wait until poverty, insecurity and the informal economy itself have been overcome.

Recognizing that traditional approaches to improvement of working conditions were failing to reach those most in need, the ILO developed and has implemented innovative programmes, such as Work Improvement in Small Enterprises (WISE), around the world. These programmes have often been highly effective at the local level, leading to concrete changes to workplaces and work management that have improved working conditions, productivity and enterprise performance. However, although WISE and other ILO efforts have shown considerable success at the level of individual enterprises, they have been less successful in attempts to reach significant scale. The ILO now wants to develop approaches which build on the successful aspects of such programmes, but are also able to reach a significant proportion of women and men in micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and the informal economy.

The ILO's Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL) therefore developed a learning and research agenda ([www.ilo.org/travail/pdf/research\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/travail/pdf/research_agenda.pdf)), with the aim of better understanding how to improve working and employment conditions of women and men in MSEs and the informal economy on a large scale, in a more comprehensive manner, and taking into account the links of this effort with other key development problems, particularly poverty and gender equality. This involves defining the vision for improving working and employment conditions and how changes might be achieved, encompassing the following three key aspects: scale, impact and sustainability. The ILO will pursue this learning agenda through an integrated effort including research, action research, pilot projects, impact studies, literature reviews, consultation within the ILO, consultation with key stakeholders and informal information gathering.

This literature review is a first step in pursuing this learning and research agenda, aimed at identifying what has been tried and what has worked in experiences around the world related to conditions in the informal economy and MSEs. A number of important lessons can be extracted from the diverse experiences that are reported on here.

This paper was written by Dr. Richard Rinehart and was inspired by the learning and research agenda prepared by Ms. Alexandra Overy Miehlebradt. I would like to thank both of them for their important contributions to this initiative, and to thank all those, in and outside the ILO, who have been so generous with information and time.

William D. Salter,  
Conditions of Work and Employment Programme,  
International Labour Office





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## Executive summary

### Background

The numbers of micro and small enterprises and people working in the informal economy are growing rapidly around the world, and account for the bulk of new employment and for the majority of the working poor. In assessments of working and employment conditions, including issues of occupational safety and health, maternity protection, work-family issues, home work, working time, wages and income, work organization, sexual harassment, violence at work, workload, worker's welfare facilities, housing, nutrition and environment, the millions of women and men in micro and small enterprises and the informal economy (MSE/IE) face perhaps the greatest problems among the working population.

They are engaged in a wide array of activities that cover most industries in rural and urban environments. They are subsistence and small-scale farmers, food traders and processors, health and sanitation workers, domestic workers, repairers and garage mechanics, hair dressers and barbers, shoemakers and tailors, private security guards, construction and manufacturer workers, and so on. Their type of employment can involve contract labour, family labour, casual labour, apprenticeship, permanent labour, communal labour or even child labour. Their numbers are great in most developing countries, yet they are often invisible to national statistics surveys and beyond the reach of regulatory and support services for improving working and employment conditions designed for larger enterprises. Different aspects of the macro environment, such as economic conditions, trade and infrastructure, and physical planning can have a profound effect on working and employment conditions, but the dynamics of this effect are not well understood. In addition, local social structures and cultural norms often make it difficult to reach and address poor working and employment conditions. These obstacles are particularly harsh for women workers.

Because of the relative invisibility of these workers and numerous other factors, it is often difficult to determine how best to design a comprehensive strategy to improve their working and employment conditions within MSE/IE. To make a difference in the lives of these women and men, a better understanding of how to promote change and produce better working and employment conditions in the informal economy is needed. This paper is intended to take the first step towards consolidating international experience from programmes around the world that have made a difference and distilling key elements of their design.

### Methods

The author identified 30 articles for review. Only reports that described an actual intervention or proposed ways to improve conditions were included. A select few discussed lessons learned from previous activities, reported "what worked" or what could work based on experience, or gave recommendations for future programmes. Some of the articles reviewed provided detailed descriptions of potential target groups, which may prove useful in the design of future programmes.

Other reports reviewed were not directly related to improving working and employment conditions; they sometimes focused on extending business development services and credit to micro-entrepreneurs, or on other development issues related to the working poor. These reports were included because of the inter-relatedness of working and

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employment conditions with other development disciplines. That is, the author believes that programmes that strive to improve conditions at work also have the potential to reduce poverty, financial risk and the risk factors associated with hazardous child labour. Such programmes may improve health, nutrition, sanitation and education for adults and children, and create an environment where the needs of work can be balanced with the needs of families. Creating better working and employment conditions reaps benefits for the family and the community.

The reverse can be true as well. Projects focused solely on some other aspect of development can have positive effects on working and employment conditions. However, these stand-alone efforts may also make conditions worse. These issues are discussed in more detail in the body of the report.

## **Seventeen questions asked by the literature review**

This document analyzes the literature through a lens of which approaches and strategies have been most successful in reaching vulnerable populations, changing working conditions, institutionalizing change within practice and within policy, and sustaining this change over time. The document is framed to focus on these issues by asking 17 questions and looking to the literature to provide answers and guidance on how to go forward. The questions are listed below. In the main body of the report, answers are given for each question along with examples from the literature.

1. In what technical subject areas have improvements in working and employment conditions been achieved? Which technical areas have had the widest outreach?
2. For which target groups have past programmes been most successful? Why? For which groups have past programmes been less successful? Why?
3. How have initiatives resulted in a sustainable increase in demand for improvements in working and employment conditions among individuals in the programme target groups?
4. How have initiatives resulted in sustained delivery of services, assistance and/or information that help improve working and employment conditions of individuals in the programme target group?
5. How have initiatives resulted in a diversification of the types of services, assistance and/or information being delivered which help people in the target group improve their working and employment conditions?
6. How have initiatives resulted in expansion of the numbers and types of organizations that are actively promoting improvements in working and employment conditions in MSEs and/or the informal economy in a sustainable way?
7. How have initiatives resulted in sustained improvement in working and employment conditions and/or productivity among participating enterprises, individuals or families?
8. How have initiatives resulted in sustained improvement in working and employment conditions and/or productivity among other enterprises, individuals or families?
9. How have initiatives resulted in sustained improvement in working and employment conditions for particularly vulnerable groups?

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10. How have initiatives made a significant impact on the “worst” working and employment conditions problems among participating enterprises, individuals or families (including providing a definition and rationale for why these conditions are considered the “worst”)?
  11. How have initiatives resulted in changes to the policy or regulatory framework for MSE/informal economy development or for working and employment conditions?
  12. How have initiatives resulted in changes to other aspects of the macro environment that affect working and employment conditions in MSEs and the informal economy?
  13. How have initiatives had an impact on the achievement of broader social goals (within participating enterprises, individuals or families), including poverty reduction, gender equality and business development?
  14. What are the strengths and weaknesses of past and current programmes with reference to the ILO’s aims for future programmes, particularly in the areas of the choice of target groups, the choice of technical subject areas addressed, and the mechanisms for improving working and employment conditions?
  15. Have participants in programmes acted as change agents, resulting in the spread of working and employment conditions improvements to other enterprises, individuals or families? If so, what are the characteristics of these participants and how did the spread of improvements take place?
  16. To what extent have past and current programmes tailored their strategies or technical content to specific target groups, such as women or specific subsectors, or according to the size of enterprises? Why? For what types of working and employment conditions improvements? Has tailoring increased the effectiveness of these programmes? How?
  17. What types of institutions (private, public and civil society) have taken on which roles in past and current programmes? What have been the strengths and weaknesses of various institutions vis-à-vis the roles they performed?

## **Results of the literature review**

This paper reviewed literature related to promoting working and employment conditions for women and men working in micro and small enterprises and the informal economy (MSE/IE). The purpose was to take a first step towards consolidating international experience from programmes around the world that have made a positive difference in peoples' lives and distilling key elements of their design. This document analyzed the literature through a lens of what approaches and strategies have been most successful in reaching vulnerable populations, changing working and employment conditions, institutionalizing change within practice and policy, and sustaining this change over time. The document focused on these issues by asking key questions and looking to the literature to provide answers and guidance on how to go forward.

One main conclusion from the exercise is that we have a long way to go to fully understand the best practices for implementing working and employment conditions projects in MSE/IE. First of all, the operational definition of working and employment conditions is broad. It includes:

- 
- occupational safety and health;
  - maternity protection;
  - work-family issues;
  - working time;
  - work conducted at home (home work);
  - wages and income;
  - work organization;
  - sexual harassment;
  - violence at work;
  - workload; and
  - workers' welfare facilities.

Of the reports identified, few included more than one or two aspects of the definition. In fact, it is not clear that all aspects could be combined into one large intervention package for one target population because of the many types and circumstances of work. Individual aspects of working and employment conditions may be best applied to select populations where the needs of those populations are the greatest. For example, this report discussed women as single heads of households/breadwinners and the problem of lack of affordable, quality day care for their children. This group has many “needs”, but, depending on what they do for work, some aspects of working and employment conditions, such as occupational safety and health, may not be the most pressing need for them.

Relatively few written documents were found that described *interventions* that specifically focused on working and employment conditions for people in MSE/IE. However, based on the author’s personal communication with several people within and outside the International Labour Organization, it was clear that many more activities have been or were being conducted that might have been related to the topic of this paper. Many of these projects have not been summarized in writing or are described in internal reports not yet released to the public.

Occupational safety and health (OSH) was the most commonly addressed subject area. No projects were identified that focused on sexual harassment or violence issues for MSE/IE workers. Intervention methods for these topics may need to be further researched and pilot studies conducted to examine the feasibility of different approaches. In relation to OSH and possibly maternity protection and home work, there were several related reports and their recommendations likely give the basis for designing new interventions.

The issue of “sustainability” (i.e. how long a changed condition may last) was one of the main questions asked prior to writing this literature review. However, only two reports identified for the review attempted to measure sustainability after project funds ended. The others described what appeared to work from past studies and gave recommendations based on personal experience and/or lessons learned from the eyes of project implementers. While many of these recommendations made sense and would likely contribute to a successful project if followed, the issue of sustainability is still largely unanswered. More preplanning for follow-up activities to measure issues related to sustainability is needed when new projects are being designed.

There is at least one practical resource, the *Guide to evaluating the effectiveness of strategies for preventing work injuries: How to show whether a safety intervention really*

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*works*.<sup>1</sup> Methods described in this document could be examined for fit with new projects as they are planned. However, because of the disparate nature of MSE/IE and the potential complexity of future interventions with numerous stakeholders, project-specific performance measures will likely need to be developed for each intervention. The literature reviewed was not very helpful in suggesting what these measures should be.

Of the many recommendations synthesized from the literature reviewed, creating demand for services *and* demand for providing services by key partners were identified as key objectives for future projects. To create demand from MSE/IE workers and micro-entrepreneurs, the literature review identified five elements that should be considered: (1) do a thorough job collecting preliminary data on potential target populations and geographic areas; (2) distinguish between “perceived needs” and “real needs”; (3) focus efforts locally; (4) find a local “champion”; and (5) create an environment for workers and micro-entrepreneurs to form or join networks or associations. Different strategies have been applied to address these elements, but all five appear necessary for successful project design.

Relative to the potential for sustained delivery of services after primary donor involvement ends, important areas to address suggested by the literature were (1) working with and raising awareness among potential partners about working and employment conditions and showing how improvements can positively affect business success; (2) designing interventions, based on initial research, that meet the demands of the individuals they are meant to reach; (3) keeping the visibility of donor involvement in projects to a minimum to ease the transition from direct involvement to sustained delivery of services; (4) expanding partner organizations beyond a federal government agency because government officials may not be in the best position to sustain services; (5) clearly specifying what aspect(s) of working and employment conditions are being targeted; and (6) promoting university-based “information hubs” to increase the number of local experts.

Most past projects were integrated with numerous organizations, or it was recommended that this be a primary goal of future projects. Sometimes these projects joined forces with organizations that focused on development disciplines other than working and employment conditions. This type of collaboration ranged from the international level to local organizations and intermediaries that represent the different interests of specific groups of workers or business owners in MSE/IE.

Future programmes should strive to collect preliminary information on all potential collaborating organizations that have the potential to interact with those in MSE/IE and to clearly define strategies to obtain buy-in from them, if appropriate. As one author stated, in order to be successful, working and employment conditions issues may need to initially take a back seat to other development initiatives that are “perceived” to be more immediately important to target populations and those that might deliver services.

<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.iwh.on.ca/archive/pdfs/SafetyBk.pdf>.



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## 1. Introduction

The numbers of micro and small enterprises and people working in the informal economy are growing rapidly around the world and account for the bulk of new employment and for the majority of the working poor. These enterprises exist throughout most industrial sectors, each with a variety of sub-sectors, occupations and activities in which people are engaged. In assessments of working and employment conditions, including issues of occupational safety and health, maternity protection, work-family issues, home work, working time, wages and income, work organization, sexual harassment, violence at work, workload, worker's welfare facilities, housing, nutrition and environment, the millions of women and men in micro and small enterprises and the informal economy face perhaps the greatest problems among the working population.

For these women and men, the working situation is complex and obstacles may appear insurmountable. First of all, they are engaged in a wide array of activities that cover most industries in rural and urban environments. They are subsistence and small-scale farmers, food traders and processors, health and sanitation workers, domestic workers, repairers and garage mechanics, hair dressers and barbers, shoemakers and tailors, private security men, construction and manufacturer workers, and so on. Their type of employment can involve contract labour, family labour, casual labour, apprenticeship, permanent labour, communal labour, or even child labour. Their numbers are great in most developing countries, yet they are often invisible and beyond the reach of the traditional regulatory approaches for improving working and employment conditions designed for larger enterprises. Different aspects of the macro environment, such as economic conditions, trade and infrastructure, and physical planning, can have a profound effect on working and employment conditions, but the dynamics of this effect are not well understood. In addition, local social structures and cultural norms often make it difficult to reach and address poor working and employment conditions. These obstacles are particularly difficult for women workers.

Because of their relative invisibility and numerous other factors, it is often difficult to determine how best to design a comprehensive strategy to improve working and employment conditions among workers within MSE/IE. Due to the breadth of work environments they represent and the diversity of issues related to employment, they are not easily identifiable as a single target group. Further, while many business or development-oriented groups may interface with these workers, their agendas are generally organized around other development goals that are not recognized as related to working and employment conditions.

To make a difference in the lives of these women and men, a better understanding of how to promote change and produce better working and employment conditions in the informal economy is needed. The ILO's Conditions of Work and Employment Programme (TRAVAIL) is embarking on a learning and research agenda to design future programmes to improve working and employment conditions in MSEs and the informal economy on a much larger scale than has been done in the past. The learning and research agenda is the precursor to creating a strong comprehensive strategy based on three criteria: impact, scale and sustainability. This paper is intended to take the first step towards consolidating international experience from programmes around the world that have made a difference and distilling key elements of their design. It is hoped that these lessons learned will contribute to a better understanding of how to support change for this vulnerable and often overlooked population.

This document analyzes the literature through a lens of what approaches and strategies have been most successful in reaching vulnerable populations, changing working conditions, institutionalizing change within practice and within policy, and sustaining this

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change over time. The document is framed to focus on these issues by asking key questions and looking to the literature to provide answers and guidance on how to go forward.

The organization of the document is meant to allow readers to review the general findings and trends of several projects over the past decade and to look more specifically at those experiences. Part 2 briefly describes the literature review process. Part 3 is the bulk of the report and answers 17 questions that were identified prior to the start of the report. Part 4 gives conclusions. Throughout the text, there are references to appendix sections. These are indicated with a letter and number in parentheses: (A.7), (A.8), and so on.

The appendix contains detailed summaries of the reviewed documents. Each review is structured by the name of the article, the country(ies) of focus, background information and objectives of the paper, lessons learned and recommendations given. A comments section is provided for each review as a quick summary of how the reviewed document relates to the objectives of this paper.



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## 2. Literature review process

As the first stage of the ILO-TRAVAIL learning and research agenda, this document outlines insights from selected literature on past and current programmes and existing studies related to MSEs and the informal economy. The author identified 30 articles for review from published literature, the Internet and internal ILO reports, many through personal contacts.

Over the past decade, there have been numerous reports that highlight the poor status of working and employment conditions in MSEs and the informal economy. However, only reports that described an actual intervention or proposed ways to improve conditions were included. A select few discussed lessons learned from previous activities, reported “what worked” or what could work based on experience, or gave recommendations for future programmes. Some of the articles reviewed provided detailed descriptions of potential target groups, which may prove useful in the design of future programmes.

Other reports reviewed were not directly related to improving working and employment conditions; they sometimes focused on extending business development services and credit to micro-entrepreneurs, or on other development issues related to the working poor. These reports were included because of the inter-relatedness of working and employment conditions with other development disciplines. That is, the author believes that programmes that strive to improve conditions at work also have the potential to reduce poverty, financial risk and the risk factors associated with hazardous child labour. Such programmes may improve health, nutrition, sanitation and education for adults and children, and create an environment where the needs of work can be balanced with the needs of families. Creating better working and employment conditions reaps benefits for the family and the community.

The reverse can be true as well. Projects focused solely on some other aspect of development can have positive effects on working and employment conditions. However, these stand-alone efforts may also make conditions worse. These issues are discussed in more detail in the next section of the report.

The selection of literature for review is by no means exhaustive. For example, the report does not include the many experiences that were not written when the paper was researched. The literature selected may have only skimmed the surface of the many development disciplines indirectly related to the topic of this report. However, in relation to direct interventions that specifically targeted working and employment conditions in MSE/IE, the number of written accounts available was surprisingly low. For example, few of the reports examined the long-term impact of interventions, or whether or not demand or delivery of services was sustained beyond project funding.

It is anticipated that readers of this document with insight into MSE/IE will have first-hand knowledge of additional sources of information. The ILO-TRAVAIL welcomes being notified of additional relevant documents not reviewed here, as well as comments on the contents of this report.



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### 3. Analysis of the questions answered by the literature review

This section focuses on 17 specific questions and looks to a selection of the literature and experience in the field for answers. Each subsection below is prefaced by one of the questions. Answers to these questions are given, to the extent possible, using the literature reviewed. More information on each of the projects or programme strategies is found in an abstract in the appendix, where a detailed summary is provided.

#### Technical subject areas

*In what technical subject areas have improvements in working and employment conditions been achieved? Which technical areas have had the widest outreach?*

Working conditions are intimately linked to poverty, gender equality, child labour and other key development problems. As mentioned in the introduction, the term “working and employment conditions” refers to a range of technical subject areas that women and men face in the workplace, related to their work and to the balance between their work life and their family, social and community lives. These conditions include:

- occupational safety and health;
- maternity protection;
- work-family issues;
- working time;
- work conducted at home (home work);
- wages and income;
- work organization;
- sexual harassment;
- violence at work;
- workload; and
- workers' welfare facilities.

Working conditions may also include elements of housing, nutrition and environment as they relate to work.

Screening numerous documents related to interventions meant to improve the lives and livelihoods of workers and employers in MSE/IE revealed that relatively few described *interventions* that specifically focused on more than one or two of the above aspects of working and employment conditions. Furthermore, development activities in other fields, such as health, gender issues, education, nutrition and business development, targeted at poor people rarely acknowledge that the conditions of work can have a substantial effect on their stated goals, even though most adults (and sometimes youths) spend the majority of their lives engaged in some form of income-earning activity. Improvement of working and employment conditions is typically not viewed as an objective that should be considered simultaneously with other development objectives.

Nevertheless, some projects were identified that specifically addressed one or more technical subject areas as defined above. Table 1 shows the coverage among the

documents reviewed. A summary of each document listed in Table 1 is provided in the appendix, and is referenced by the appendix section shown in the table.

Occupational safety and health issues were the most common technical subject area addressed by the literature reviewed and were included in 60 per cent of the documents reviewed. No projects were identified that focused on sexual harassment or violence issues in the workplace for MSE/IE workers. Several of the documents listed in Table 1 did not specifically cover any of the technical subject areas related to working and employment conditions. These documents instead generally focused on broader development issues focused on the target audience that were potentially relevant to the design of future programmes.

**Table 1. Articles/reports reviewed by the technical subject areas addressed**

Appendix	Occupational safety and health	Maternity protection	Work-family issues	Home work	Working time	Wages and income	Work organization	Sexual harassment	Violence at work	Workload	Worker's welfare facilities	Housing	Nutrition	Environment
A.1														
A.2														
A.3	•		•				•			•	•	•		•
A.4	•	•	•	•										
A.5	•	•	•	•	•	•						•	•	
A.6	•													
A.7	•			•										
A.8	•													
A.9	•			•										
A.10		•												
A.11						•								
A.12														
A.13	•													
A.14			•										•	
A.15	•													
A.16														
A.17														
A.18														
A.19	•						•				•			
A.20	•						•				•			
A.21	•			•										
A.22	•		•											
A.23			•											
A.24														
A.25	•						•			•	•			•
A.26														
A.27	•		•	•										
A.28	•													
A.29	•			•										
A.30	•			•		•								
Total	18	3	7	8	1	3	4	0	0	2	4	2	2	2

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## Target groups

*For which target groups have past programmes been most successful? Why? For which groups have past programmes been less successful? Why?*

Few studies reviewed attempted to measure “success” of working and employment conditions’ interventions among different target groups in an unbiased way. There were anecdotal accounts, however, geared toward specific activities that stated that interventions for some groups were or could be successful if done a certain way. While many of the characteristics of “successful” projects are brought out in later sections, one underlying prerequisite for selection of target groups of workers or micro-entrepreneurs is that there should be some form of organization or networking among them. In turn, organizations that represent the interests of MSE/IE workers in some fashion should be “targeted” as well. Some projects purposefully attempt to build networking capabilities among MSE/IE operators and those that interact with them as primary objectives.

Table 2 shows each reviewed document by selected target groups in which interventions were made or discussed in the context of recommendations for future programmes. It is difficult to universally conclude which targeted groups had the most success in past programmes. Many factors, including local political and economic situations, and institutional will and resources contribute to a project’s success. Many of these may be out of the control of the project implementer.

The eight columns on the left side of Table 2 denote the primary target audience — that is, different categories of workers and operators of small-scale enterprise. The 12 columns on the right show most of the partners or intermediary organizations that were targeted by the projects. The categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive; for instance, home-based workers may work in the urban informal economy.

Table 2. Articles/reports reviewed by the target groups discussed (categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive)

Appendix	Small enterprises (formal sector)	Urban informal economy	Rural informal economy	Farming activities	Home-based workers	Self-employed persons	Traders and street hawkers	Women workers		Government (national)	Government (local)	Business associations and clubs	Workers' organizations	Non-governmental organizations	Community-based organizations	Self-help groups	Micro-financing organizations	Business development services	Micro-insurance schemes	Media outlets	Local health centres
A.1		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
A.2		•		•	•			•		•	•	•		•							•
A.3				•				•				•			•						
A.4		•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•	•	•			•	•			
A.5		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•		•	•						
A.6		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
A.7		•			•			•		•	•	•									•
A.8	•	•				•				•	•	•									•
A.9		•	•		•			•		•	•			•	•						•
A.10		•	•					•					•	•	•				•		
A.11		•						•				•		•	•		•				
A.12		•	•		•								•	•	•	•					
A.13	•	•	•			•								•				•			
A.14		•	•					•		•				•				•			•
A.15		•	•							•				•				•			
A.16		•	•							•	•			•							•
A.17		•	•							•				•							
A.18		•	•								•			•				•			
A.19	•	•								•		•		•				•			
A.20	•	•								•		•		•				•			
A.21		•	•			•		•		•				•			•				
A.22		•																	•		
A.23		•						•		•				•							
A.24	•									•		•		•		•					
A.25	•									•		•		•							
A.26	•	•	•							•		•		•				•			
A.27	•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
A.28	•									•		•		•		•				•	
A.29		•			•	•	•	•		•		•		•							
A.30		•			•			•		•		•		•		•		•			
Total	9	25	15	6	10	8	6	16		22	8	17	11	23	13	6	6	13	4	4	8

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## Sustained increase in demand for improvements

*How have initiatives resulted in a sustainable increase in demand for improvements in working and employment conditions among individuals in the programme target groups?*

The continued improvement in the state of working and employment conditions after donor funding to direct participants and their peers ends has a much greater chance of being sustained if there is significant local demand for change. Unfortunately, the development of local demand is often impeded by the perceived competing interests between economic development and what is needed to provide a workplace that is safe for workers and their families. Workers may feel compelled to sacrifice their own well-being to achieve other social goals for themselves or their families, may simply remain generally unaware of the harm or risks that they continue to encounter, or may think that any change in their explicit demand for better working conditions could risk their ability to keep working profitably. Entrepreneurs may not understand how to make changes in working and employment conditions and stay in business.

Programmes that attempt to build demand for these changes among workers and entrepreneurs may also begin to construct the foundations for sustained change in the erroneous perception that working and employment conditions and economic development cannot go hand-in-hand. The literature suggests that attention to building demand is particularly vital to programme success, but it is not very enlightening about how to achieve sustained demand over the long run, well after interventions end.

There are five elements suggested by several successful projects around the world that help to establish and possibly sustain demand for change in working and employment conditions: (1) collect preliminary data; (2) distinguish between “perceived needs” and “real needs”; (3) focus efforts locally; (4) find a local “champion”; and (5) create an environment for workers and micro-entrepreneurs to form or join networks or associations. Each element is discussed in paragraphs that follow.

The importance of data collection activities resonates throughout this report. This is a necessary prerequisite for developing strategies to stimulate demand for making improvements in working and employment conditions and potentially understanding what is needed to change a culture to sustain these conditions. Data collection establishes the basis for selecting and shaping a programme’s direct interventions. There are many examples in the literature of the importance of making data-driven decisions to design programmes. Several projects that purposefully collected data and made effective use of them are given below.

For a Uganda radio project named *Nekolera Gyange*, programme designers conducted marketing and consumer-focused surveys and confirmed that listeners wanted radio programmes that presented relevant information on operating small enterprises. Seventy per cent of those interviewed said that they were willing to participate in a radio programme and 40 per cent expressed an interest in advertising. This research led to the successful launch of a radio format in Africa that presents information with worker participation rather than strictly to workers, and has been replicated in at least two rural areas in Uganda and an urban area of Ghana (A.13).

In 1995, Save the Children Federation conducted an action research programme in the Philippines focused on improving working conditions for informal sector workers, particularly women. The programme included surveys and interviews of the target subjects, followed by on-site (home or workplace) evaluations of occupational safety and

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health conditions and medical evaluations. The study included both subjective (surveys and interviews) and objective (work-site and medical evaluations) methods. The purpose was to assess the demand for services and actual conditions of work so that an effective intervention plan could be developed. Community volunteer health workers (CVHW) participated in the data collection activities (A.7).

The CVHW programme in the Philippines provides basic outreach and health services to low-income communities nationwide and is implemented by the Philippines Department of Health. There are 270,000 trained CVHWs throughout the Philippines who are supervised by the local government rural health midwives in each community. One of the lessons learned from the project was that involving CVHWs in the initial research and data collection increased their knowledge of the informal sector activities prevalent in their communities. It also increased their enthusiasm for future training. Because a simple survey was used, it was easily replicable in other communities, and the information that was gathered both added to a database on the informal sector and increased the awareness of CVHWs about their own communities. The CVHWs were also active participants in later phases of the Save the Children project, which included developing training modules and providing training to informal sector workers.

Before demand can be measured, Leviton and Sheehy argue that target audiences should be divided into subgroups by their level of awareness and interest in changing working and employment conditions (A.8). In their article, they suggest that different intervention strategies may be needed for the following:

- those who do not yet understand the importance of working and employment conditions on their business success and livelihood;
- those who do understand the importance of good working and employment conditions, but are not yet planning to do anything about improving the current situation;
- those who are aware of the problem and are actively seeking low-cost ways to improve the situation;
- those who have already made substantial improvements to their working and employment conditions.

Prior knowledge about the level of demand of subgroups within target populations is critical *before* moving forward with new large-scale interventions. Data may suggest that interventions for each subgroup identified should be tailored to their specific level of awareness and motivation for change.

The ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) relies heavily on data collection activities for programme design and implementation. Through ILO-IPEC's Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC), central statistical offices in several countries have conducted household surveys that yield national estimates on the number of working children. SIMPOC rapid assessment surveys, conducted by in-country research teams, employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the nature and extent of hazardous and exploitative child labour. Baseline surveys also use a mix of these methods to provide benchmark information for a specific target population and how demand for change can be affected (A.27).

Data collection initiatives can also be used to identify and recognize the difference between demand, or "perceived needs", and "real needs". According to a recommendation made by the Committee of Donor Agencies for Small Enterprise Development, recognition of this difference is important, and appropriate weight in the design of projects should be



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given to perceived needs, relative to the more traditional expert assessment of real needs (A.26). Projects that ignore perceived needs are destined to be unsustainable. However, a major challenge for projects that intend to improve working and employment conditions in MSE/IE is that the perceived need for such change is often low. This is particularly true for issues related to occupational safety and health (A.6).

Programmes such as the ILO's Work Improvements in Small Enterprises (WISE) can demonstrate to entrepreneurs that increased productivity and improved working conditions can go hand-in-hand (A.19, A.20). However, this relationship may be negative if development efforts attempt to increase productivity based solely on the "perceived needs" of entrepreneurs. Blind growth of some enterprises, accelerated by external interventions, may lead to decreased working and employment conditions if, for example, larger amounts of chemicals are bought and used without knowledge of the potential adverse health and environmental risks. Donor-based interventions based solely on a market-driven paradigm of perceived needs may not realize the potential health and social consequences of their activities (A.7). Workers and micro-entrepreneurs in MES/IE often have inadequate education and little access to knowledge, and efforts are typically needed to raise awareness and generate demand for services that they would not otherwise perceive as important.

Some exceptions do exist where demand for an aspect of working and employment conditions naturally exists. For example, surveys of women belonging to health micro-insurance schemes suggest that the demand for maternity care and protection is relatively high (A.10). As such, the promotion of schemes that offer maternity care and/or cash benefits may be a logical first start to a comprehensive intervention package, and a possible vehicle through which other aspects of working and employment conditions can be promoted. For example, women working in occupations with a high prevalence of chemical exposure or physical stress, conditions that may adversely affect pregnant mothers and their unborn children, may be good populations to combine occupational safety and health interventions through insurance schemes that offer maternity protection. Future programmes that assess and address both perceived and real needs, and the appropriate balance between the two, may contribute to the ability to define a solid strategy and determine what to invest in related activity.

Another theme that is reiterated throughout many of the documents reviewed is that it is important to focus efforts locally. According to a World Bank report, poor people's realities should be the starting point. A mindset driven by looking at the work through the eyes of poor women and men, and then searching for the best-fit interventions, will prevent many mistakes (A.1). In Bangladesh, after a data collection survey identified children working in the high-hazard construction sector within targeted geographic regions, NGO mobilizers went door-to-door to raise awareness and motivate parents to participate in a programme. The support of influential community members who can be viewed as champions was essential in winning over parents and promoting demand for change (A.29). The ILO implemented the Regional Programme on Micro and Small Enterprises Development and Workers' Protection or Work Improvement and Development of Enterprise (WIDE) programme during calendar year 1997 in the Philippines, Nepal and Malaysia to address the interconnected problems of low productivity, low profits and poor working conditions in MSEs in the Asian and Pacific region. Fostering demand for the training courses was a problem of all implementing organizations. The most effective marketing strategies were personal contact with target participants and marketing through community and association leaders (A.30). Interacting at the community level is important for project participants to feel a sense of ownership and awareness that they are involved in something new with their peers and with people that they know and respect.

As mentioned above, projects have also identified local "champions" to influence demand. For example, a project to improve working conditions in small tanneries in India

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selected local “champion” enterprises to be role models on how improvements in occupational safety and health can lead to higher productivity (A.25). This strategy was also identified as important in the proceedings from a national seminar in the Philippines that examined years of experience with the ILO WISE programmes. One of the recommendations was to recognize local champions through documented testimonies, awards and recommendations. Success stories were also created for marketing that focused on individual model enterprises that benefited from the WISE programme (A.20). Finally, in the United States, public service announcements by sports celebrities popular among Hispanic and immigrant workers have been created to inform workers that they have certain rights and protections under health and safety laws and to tell them what to do if they are working in a risky situation or are injured (A.28).

Consolidation of target audiences has been shown to be helpful for project success, particularly to increase the scale of coverage. In several cases, programme designers have grouped workers around common themes and worker problems, thereby increasing the ability to build demand and reach difficult or expensive to reach populations. This theme is stressed in several of the papers reviewed in this report. For example, the *Report of the National Seminar of Safety and Health for Home-based Workers in Thailand* states that having home-based workers working together as consolidated home-based groups is essential to create better working conditions (A.9). In another project, the Start Your own Business (SYB) training in Vietnam, evaluators found that 74 per cent of the consolidated workers starting their own businesses maintained regular contact with their co-participants after the programme ended by exchanging information informally (A.11). This initiative not only helped participants improve their businesses, it also paved the way for the development of new networks among these small-scale women entrepreneurs.

International experience with the ILO WISE programme also highlights the importance of a comprehensive strategy that builds and consolidates target groups. For example, more than 20 WISE training programmes were held in Chile in the early 1990s. After participating in WISE workshops, entrepreneurs organized themselves into “synergy circles”. Their activities included mutual advice to continue improving working conditions and productivity; the exchange of commodities and industrial processes; and exploration of new business opportunities including exports, further training and obtaining business credits. In Brazil, a private national organization funded by employers translated and adapted the WISE materials and held courses all over the country (A.19). One of the main conclusions was that the WISE training programmes offered a framework to promote new associations among neighbouring businesses and for establishing and maintaining strategic commercial alliances. The need to support WISE graduates to organize and to conduct forums with other entrepreneurs was also highlighted in the Philippines (A.20). These examples draw attention to the potential for WISE to stimulate demand through local organizing among business entrepreneurs that may contribute to the potential scale, impact and sustainability of these efforts.

One report reviewed a tannery project in India that used a training approach modeled after WISE, creating training “clusters” and local information hubs. The report concluded that there was still need to strengthen the networking support to small-scale leather companies in the different leather clusters. With a focus on prevention, the formation of local information hubs at the cluster level was expected to facilitate continued training activities, and the consolidation and dissemination of “best practices” at the enterprise and cluster levels (A.25). All of these combine to further stimulate the potential for demand for change.

Another report on workers in the informal food sector stated that a number of occupational safety and health issues related to food vending would be more adequately addressed if vendors were organized and, therefore, in a more economically and spatially secure position. As such, the best way to promote demand for improvements in working

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and employment conditions is to facilitate the creation of membership-based organizations comprising food vendors and others who gain their livelihood from the preparation and sale of food in cities. In addition to raising awareness and increasing demand for change, such organizations can help these workers obtain financing, improve working and employment conditions, and secure affordable spaces in which to conduct business (A.29).

Helping small-scale operators to network with each other has been identified as being important for more than simply sustaining demand for change. In a report on business centres for small enterprise development in Eastern Europe, it was stated that business centres could play an important economic development role by promoting the local MSE sector and supporting the setting up of business associations that strengthen the voice for micro-enterprises in a given region. These centres may be in a position to promote awareness among entrepreneurs that improving working conditions can have a positive impact on enterprise productivity and competitiveness (A.24).

According to the Save the Children project mentioned above, an existing level of organization among workers is a prerequisite to effectively addressing the working condition issues of informal sector operators. It would not be effective to address these issues in a specific industry before there is some level of organization among the workers and, preferably, an institution that can provide long-term representation and support (A.7).

At a national level, a World Bank report recognized that poor people's membership-based organizations are often overlooked by development projects. In many parts of the world, poor women and men have organized beyond communities into federated networks with representation at the national level. Such networks include producers' and farmers' associations, slum dwellers' networks and trade unions. These organizations, as well as other civil society organizations such as business management institutes and chambers of commerce, are important actors that need to be part of policy dialogue and project implementation where appropriate (A.1).

## **Sustained delivery of services**

*How have initiatives resulted in sustained delivery of services, assistance and/or information that help improve working and employment conditions of individuals in the programme target group?*

As with demand, there are several recommendations from past projects that increase the potential for sustained delivery of services after primary donor involvement ends. One is the importance of working with and raising awareness among potential partners about working and employment conditions and how the improvements can positively affect business success. A second is to design interventions, based on initial research, that meet the demands of the individuals they are meant to reach. A third recommendation is to keep the visibility of donor involvement in projects to a minimum to ease the transition from direct involvement to sustained delivery of services. A fourth is to expand partner organizations beyond a federal government agency, because government officials might not be in the best position to sustain services. A fifth recommendation is to clearly specify what aspect(s) of working and employment conditions are being targeted. For example, efforts to improve occupational safety and health in a sustainable way may be different than helping to set up the infrastructure for continued improvement in maternity care and services. Finally, promoting university-based information hubs to build a local knowledge base has the potential to last long after donor funding ends.

Projects aimed at MSE/IE need a grassroots focus, because most workers at the low end of the economic ladder interact at a very local level. There is increasing recognition of

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the need to include non-governmental organizations, micro-insurance schemes, business or labour associations, community-based organizations, national and local government agencies, health professionals, university researchers, and networks of workers and entrepreneurs to promote working and employment conditions, because these groups have the potential to interact with otherwise hard-to-reach communities. However, the focus of many of these groups is often on increasing profits through credit and other business development services, or on curative rather than preventive measures to increase profits or address health and social problems. The concept that working and employment conditions are intertwined with almost every aspect of poor peoples' lives has not yet gained much attention (A.7). Further, potential partner organizations and intermediaries that are willing and able to work with workers in MSE/IE are generally not prepared to make working and employment conditions a major element of their work (A.6). To enable these organizations to understand and help improve conditions, more needs to be done to increase their awareness and change their orientation (A.7).

Government departments, NGOs and other groups that are interested in promoting economic growth and helping poor people improve their situations may not recognize how working and employment conditions problems relate to their objectives. However, intervention programmes that attempt to raise awareness among these groups often begin to construct the foundations to deliver high-quality services to improve the potential for economic and social growth, which is particularly vital to sustained programme success.

Even in situations of high worker demand, projects that attempt to improve working and employment conditions must rely on the involvement of specific intermediary organizations and change agents. They are important to the successful implementation of project activity on the ground, and can mediate change in supportive policy or other macro conditions and help apply pressure when there are substantial obstacles.

To illustrate this further, the Government of Togo implemented the Grassroots Development Initiatives Project (GDIP) from 1990 to 1998 (A.5). The project, supported by the World Bank, piloted the use of participatory approaches to work directly with NGOs through the Federation of NGOs in Togo. The objective of the project was to improve the living standards and working conditions of the country's poorest communities. The GDIP provided direct assistance to NGOs, who were the key implementation partners, and strengthened their capacity to prepare, implement and manage community-level projects. Findings from the GDIP included the following:

- Building a relationship between government and NGO is time-consuming, particularly if there is initial reticence to work together, but worthwhile if done well.
- For projects that are critically dependent on a participatory approach involving all stakeholders, beneficiaries, NGOs and government, it is essential to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each set of actors. Beneficiaries and NGOs should be involved in project design, execution and management; government should provide policy guidance but not day-to-day management.
- With NGOs as intermediaries in a project, it is important to have eligibility criteria and a pre-selection process to ensure their technical and financial capacity to carry out subprojects.
- Well-designed training programmes for NGOs, associations or groups of beneficiaries should be a priority.
- To ensure that sponsoring NGOs provide the necessary support to communities, they need to be particularly compensated for the expenses incurred in preparation, execution and operation of subprojects.

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- Subprojects should emphasize both the economic and social aspects and capacity building and institutional support for grassroots community organizations.

Another example of the importance of raising awareness among intermediary organizations to sustain delivery of services is reflected in the strategy to introduce WISE to Latin America (A.19). In these activities, the ILO WISE programme spread its methodology through business organizations, private and government agencies, and regional organizations dedicated to the promotion and development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Implementation was based on three essential elements.

1. The reinforcement of the capacity of institutions to operate with the WISE methodology in a self-sufficient way.
2. The formation of high-level specialists on working conditions that could assist in the trainings.
3. The adaptation of technical content to the needs and practices of local participants.

Numerous seminars were carried out with local chambers of commerce, universities and technical institutions. Some of these organizations acted as partners during the trainings. Others included the WISE methodology in their own programmes after the trainings, or were interested in participating in technical projects or in designing programmes for the dissemination of the methodology to the national level.

Sustained delivery of services is also dictated by how well the product is tailored to the needs of the target audience and to those who are helping to promote change. As mentioned earlier, the Save the Children Federation conducted an action research programme in the Philippines focused on improving working conditions for informal sector workers (A.7). The programme built on two existing mechanisms for reaching the informal sector: community volunteer health workers and a trade association of informal sector workers called Partners for Subsector Development (PSD). As mentioned previously, the CVHW programme provides basic outreach and health services to low-income communities nationwide and is implemented by the Philippines Department of Health. The PSD is a trade association of micro-entrepreneurs who make industrial cleaning rags, floor mats and other products from fabric remnants or *retaso*. There are approximately 50,000 women, mainly concentrated in and around Metro Manila, who do this kind of work in their homes.

The project tested the effectiveness and the potential integration of these two existing institutions for the delivery of community-based occupational safety and health (OSH) services. Save the Children designed a generalized curriculum in OSH for community volunteer health workers and an additional module that addressed the specific issues of home-based *retaso* workers. The CVHWs from communities with concentrations of *retaso* workers went through both the generalized training and the specific module. Representatives of the PSD also attended the training to promote cooperation between these two organizations.

The general objective of the project was to enable CVHWs to make sustainable improvements in the OSH of workers in the informal sector. Specific objectives included the following:

- Design a widely applicable training module in urban informal sector occupational safety and health suitable for audiences such as CVHWs and grassroots trade associations, and design a submodule specifically for the *retaso* industry.
- Test the submodule in five selected communities through trainings.

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- Ensure the integration of OSH into the routine roles of the CVHWs in the five pilot communities.
  - Facilitate a partnership between PSD and CVHWs in improving the working conditions of *retaso* workers.
  - Take initial steps to integrate OSH into the national CVHW training curriculum of the Department of Health.

Ultimately, the *retaso* project focused on the existing health and working conditions among informal sector workers, particularly women. The following key lessons were learned from this project:

- Informal sector operators developed their own ways to improve their productivity and working conditions. One of the best methods for developing simple solutions to common OSH problems in a specific industry is to conduct case studies of workers from different areas to identify best practices in the industry. These practices can be combined during a workshop with members of a trade association and institutionalized through the association to improve conditions for more workers in the given industry.
- Involving CVHWs in the research increased their knowledge of the informal sector activities prevalent in their communities and their enthusiasm for the training.
- As a socio-cultural norm, Filipinos accept pain as an integral part of work. If training and awareness building is to be effective, it should include activities to change this attitude.
- A participatory research and training methodology is essential to enable CVHWs to contextualize problems and apply lessons to actual settings.
- Currently there is a low level of awareness about working conditions in the informal sector by national and local government organizations and the health profession. To enable government agencies and health professionals to understand and help address the problems of informal sector workers, more needs to be done to increase their awareness and change their orientation from curative to preventive.
- Because one of the most effective ways to improve working conditions in the informal sector is for workers themselves to make changes, mechanisms should emphasize education and promotion. Community-based approaches are more effective than clinic-based approaches.
- Members of the informal sector will endure almost any conditions to earn income. Mechanisms to address OSH must work within this reality and focus on enhancing income-earning opportunities and working conditions in tandem.
- The working and living conditions in the urban informal sector are inseparable. The only way to make lasting improvements is to improve infrastructure and basic services in urban poor areas.

Further recommendations from this project include promoting dialogue among NGOs, the Department of Health and Local Government Units (LGUs) to develop integrated support of the CVHWs. The authors state that dialogue between CVHWs and LGUs is particularly important in addressing the fundamental causes of poor working conditions. Participatory action research and training modules that are industry specific provide an important complement to the work of the CVHWs. Training for trade

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associations should be simple enough so that persons with no health background can understand the basic concepts. Training should focus on demonstrating the link between working conditions and productivity. The NGOs that work with informal sector associations can coordinate research by facilitating cooperation between researchers and trade associations. With the input of the trade associations, NGOs can design and conduct the industry-specific training modules. NGOs can also be instrumental in helping informal sector associations to institutionalize support for improving working conditions and self-regulation in informal sector industries.

The ILO WIDE programme mentioned in the previous section tested the plausibility of merging concepts developed under the ILO Improve Your Business with the Work Improvement in Small Enterprises for smaller enterprises in an integrated fashion. The summary of the effort reported that the implementing organizations could have benefited from more input, particularly related to working conditions. The training of trainers was a useful way to build capacity, but implementing organizations agreed that more strict screening of trainers was needed. Cooperating with grassroots associations of entrepreneurs provided a number of important benefits in programme implementation, including lowering costs and increasing impact. All the implementing organizations in the programme have received requests for additional training courses and several have already replicated the training (A.30).

Another example of the importance of fitting programmes to the realities of the intended audience is illustrated by a review of the Start and Improve Your Business training programmes in Vietnam, which have been running since 1998 in collaboration with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (A.11). While SIYB is a business-oriented programme, and not one that directly promotes working and employment conditions, it has relevance here because of the overlapping target groups in which it interacts. The objectives of the SIYB programme in Vietnam were:

- to develop and introduce a national long-term training resource and skills development capability and reflect the needs and capabilities of small-scale private enterprises;
- to develop and adapt practical resource materials that build on best practices available in the country and draw on lessons learned from small enterprise development internationally;
- to strengthen the institutional capacity of partner organizations that have a proven track record in business training and that will be entrusted with conducting the Start Your Business (SYB) and the Improve Your Business (IYB) training programmes.

From February to June 2000, Oxfam-Quebec conducted SYB training workshops for women in the provinces of Hanoi, Quang Ninh and Hai Duong. In October 2000, the SIYB project and Oxfam-Quebec (Hanoi) initiated a comprehensive survey to assess the impact of SYB training on the women participants. The survey provided much information on the impact and relevance of the specific modules (marketing, setting prices, cash flow, etc.) on the business performance in these women-owned businesses.

In July and August 2001, follow-up interviews were conducted with 20 women entrepreneurs to explore some of the topics covered during the initial survey. Half of the women had participated in SYB training, and half had not. The author combined the information collected from the initial survey, the follow-up interviews, and additional primary and secondary sources of data to assess the impact of the SYB programme on women from rural provinces. The report underscored the positive contributions of the training, and identified some specific recommendations to further improve the impact of the SYB programme on women entrepreneurs in Vietnam.

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From a technical perspective, the project should achieve the following:

- Adapt the SYB training schedule to be more responsive to the specific needs of women participants in situations where they might not be able to participate in a full five-day workshop. SYB training could be extended over a longer and thus less intensive period of time.
- Adapt the content of the SYB training programme with specifically designed gender-sensitive components and ensure after-training support with specific follow-up courses with additional topics on marketing and finances.
- Continue to support networking by assisting women in formalizing business associations and business clubs.

From a methodological perspective, the project should:

- carry out additional targeted impact surveys;
- increase the sample size of women without businesses to establish a more reliable comparison group in which comparisons can be made;
- use random sampling techniques and control groups in future impact studies.

Again, while this project focused on business skills, rather than on ways to improve working and employment conditions, much can be learned from the business development community because so many resources have been committed to projects in developing countries that promote micro and small business growth, and many of these efforts have been described and analyzed in the literature. One such analysis was conducted by a subgroup within the Committee of Donor Agencies for Small Enterprise Development, mentioned in the previous section and described in more detail below.

Traditionally, donors and governments have intervened in business development services (BDS) markets at the level of the BDS transaction: directly providing services to small enterprises (SEs) via public BDS providers, or permanently subsidizing services delivered by other BDS providers. Donors and government have historically tended to substitute for underdeveloped BDS markets, possibly crowding out existing or potential commercial providers of services. Traditional approaches have failed to achieve high outreach (access to services by a large proportion of the target population of SEs), since the numbers of SEs served is limited by the amount of subsidies available. In addition, institutional sustainability has been low, since programmes often end when public funds are exhausted (A.26).

In a new BDS market development paradigm proposed by the authors of the Committee of Donor Agencies for Small Enterprise Development report, efforts should be driven by the belief that the objectives of outreach and sustainability can be achieved only in well-driven markets for BDS, and not by direct provision by donors and governments. This shifts the focus of public and donor intervention away from direct provision and subsidies at the level of the BDS transaction, toward facilitation of a sustained increase in the demand and supply of services (A.26).

The authors argue that donor and government support should be shifted away from direct support to particular BDS providers toward facilitation functions that develop the market in a sustainable way. In other words, donors and governments should maintain a low profile at the level of BDS transaction and work primarily through BDS facilitators rather than BDS providers. The reason is that when players in BDS markets become aware of donor involvement, they may become oriented more toward the donor than to their own clients. While any intervention distorts the market, some of the more adverse effects can be



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avoided if donors are willing to adopt a low profile when intervening in BDS markets (A.26).

There are examples of working conditions projects where the high profile of donor involvement prevented the sustained delivery of services. For example, after an initial introduction by the ILO in Laos, an employers' organization offered WISE training to its members with fees, applying "marketing principles" to sustain WISE training. They collected about US\$ 7.00 from each participant to cover the costs of running the training. The project had initial success for conducting WISE in a sustainable manner without needing financial assistance from other sources.

While subsidized WISE training in Laos is still going on, the marketing mechanisms of WISE (selling WISE with fees) in Laos stopped after the initial success. Some employer organizations complained that only the ILO WISE programme collected fees for training while other UN and donor organizations provided training free of charge.<sup>2</sup> For future interventions to reach a large audience and become sustainable, the potential negative impact of donor visibility on sustainability should not be treated lightly.

Purely market-driven efforts to sustain programmes like WISE have failed for reasons other than the visibility of direct donor involvement. In the Cebu region of the Philippines, where there was an active WISE programme implemented by the national Department of Labor and Employment, past WISE participants created their own business association in the mid-1990s. Its purpose was to provide a network to help members gain better access to capital and information, as well as to privately conduct WISE workshops for a fee to train and attract future members to their association. The programme had initial success but, because of the economic downturn in the Philippine economy in the late 1990s, many of the businesses that formed the association went out of business. As a result, the business association ceased to exist.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly, the concept of promoting and sustaining services for workers and entrepreneurs in MSE/IE is complex. The above experiences suggest that a careful balance has to be made from initial project implementation through long-term follow-up activities to ensure that organizations interested in continuing services after a project ends have the tools to do so, yet are not perceived by their constituents as unfairly charging for services or looking solely to donor funds for continued success.

As suggested above, not all WISE programmes have experienced equal success. The most successful applications of WISE to date occurred where there was a clear sense of ownership among the implementing organizations, and where they felt that providing WISE workshops expanded their mandate. For example, the Philippines was one of the first countries to pilot test the WISE training concept; these programmes have been institutionalized within the government as part of a pro-poor policy to improve economic activity in the informal economy, the backbone of the economy. In the Philippines, more than 2,000 entrepreneurs and workers have been through WISE workshops, partly because the government has recognized the value of WISE concepts in its overall plan to promote social and economic development.

While the national government in the Philippines successfully expanded and institutionalized the WISE programme, this model appears unique, as other efforts to promote WISE in a sustained way strictly through the government have not been as

<sup>2</sup> Personal communication with Tsuyoshi Kawakami, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

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successful. The experience in Africa has been that reliance solely on ministries of labour to implement WISE trainings has not been sustainable. The most successful programmes on that continent have occurred when private organizations use, adapt and take ownership of the methodology.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, in Brazil, after the first promotional WISE activities in 1991 and the translation of the manuals into Portuguese in 1992, in May 1993 the Confederacy of Industries of the State of Sao Paulo sponsored a pilot seminar. From July to December of that year, the Brazilian Service of the Promotion of the Micro and Small Business (SEBRAE), together with the ILO, developed four more seminars. In 1994, the ILO supported SEBRAE in developing WISE trainings of national reach. That project, which extended through the end of 1996, resulted in the modification of training manuals according to the needs and local problems encountered in Brazil. By July 1996, 11 intensive seminars had been organized and 12 courses for the training of trainers and of managers of SEBRAE and other associated institutions. SEBRAE continues to this day to sponsor WISE workshops in Brazil.<sup>5</sup>

This section has focused mainly on selected aspects of working and employment conditions, namely occupational safety and health. For other aspects, such as maternity protection, the obstacles to reaching sustained delivery of services and ways to overcome them may be different. As mentioned in the previous section, the demand from women workers for some form of maternity protection is consistently high in regions where local health micro-insurance schemes operate. According to the authors of a report that surveyed health financing schemes from various countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America that offered maternity care and/or cash benefits, there were several obstacles that needed to be overcome by the long-lasting schemes in order for them to supply services in a sustainable way (A.10). These included:

- lack of qualified management staff with accounting capacity or a lack of proper office equipment;
- large fluctuations in members' monthly income and membership numbers, delay in payments, etc.;
- absence of an effective verification procedure on the status of a health-care service user;
- excessive usage of health-care services;
- lack of a mechanism, such as a waiting period, to minimize adverse selection.

The report identified some of the good practices implemented by selected community-based health financing schemes that may ensure long-term financial sustainability.

- Preventive and maternity care training, as well as awareness-raising on reproductive health care — provided by local women health workers in the communities — were proven to be important in encouraging women to join a health micro-insurance scheme. Awareness-raising activities naturally need to be carried out at a place and time convenient to the women's place of work and working schedule.

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication with Ben Alli, ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, Geneva, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Personal communication with Juan Carlos Hiba, ILO Regional Office for Latin America, Lima, 2003.

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- Incorporating family planning programmes into the maternity benefits offered by the schemes.
  - Incorporating complementary work, such as disease prevention and general health education for the target groups — found to be cost-effective and to reduce the general health risk of insured members and/or target groups. Extra savings gained from a general reduction of health risk would allow more scope for maternity coverage.

As the report highlighted, health micro-insurance schemes exist and are expanding in developing countries. Programmes to improve maternity protection, as part of a working and employment conditions project, have an obvious partner group with an incentive to expand their services in a sustainable way. This situation is in stark contrast with efforts to improve occupational safety and health, which are typically perceived by donors and entrepreneurs as negative to business growth and success (a perception that is based on ignorance). The literature identified and reviewed for this report is silent on efforts to address many of the other aspects of working and employment conditions at the level of the informal sector workplace. However, each aspect may have its own set of criteria that need to be considered if projects are to attain sustainability in how services are delivered.

Finally, universities may play a positive role in sustaining services to improve working and employment conditions, but are often overlooked by donor-funded projects. This potential is highlighted by a mission report for the ILO in Malaysia (A.21).

The Government of Malaysia passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1994, comprehensive legislation that covers all workers in all sectors of the economy. The Act outlines requirements for all employers and self-employed persons to follow to protect safety and health. The Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) in the Ministry of Human Resources was tasked to ensure compliance with the Act. Since DOSH historically focused only on manufacturing and construction sectors of the economy, as specified by the Factories and Machinery Act of 1967, the Department requested assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to enhance its capacity to regulate the other economic sectors covered by the Act. The UNDP agreed to fund the project, entitled Occupational Safety and Health Institutional Capacity-Building, and requested technical assistance from the International Labour Organization.

One of many objectives of the project was to conduct a feasibility study on how DOSH can begin to provide occupational safety and health information and services to self-employed persons. The mission report that covered the study provided background information, summarized findings and gave recommendations in the form of an action plan for DOSH to take to reach these typically hard-to-reach, often informal sector workers.

Of the several recommendations provided in the mission report, one focused on the promotion of “best-practices” information being collected by local university graduate students. The report suggested that DOSH could collaborate with Malaysia’s National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to funnel research funds to characterize the OSH needs and “best practices” of self-employed persons by developing a “request for proposals”, up to 20,000 Malaysian ringgit each, targeted towards supporting two to three OSH graduate students in Malaysian universities to study self-employed workplaces. The use of NIOSH research funds would be to support students to directly characterize OSH hazards, best practices, training needs and to develop training curricula for self-employed persons (e.g. motor workshops, home-based workers, shoe makers, etc.). Using NIOSH funds in this manner would also help expand the number of OSH experts in Malaysia, a necessary complement to a rapidly industrializing society. It would also raise the awareness of OSH problems and solutions among self-employed workers. The report highlighted the potential benefits of encouraging academia to play a role in identifying and characterizing the needs, demands and potential outreach opportunities for self-employed

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workers. Using resources to focus graduate students on working and employment conditions in the informal economy would increase expertise and knowledge locally, and may be a positive long-term contribution to help the working poor improve their lives.

In the report for the Indian tannery project mentioned in the previous section, the author commented that the sustained application of the interventions to improve working conditions was initially limited by the absence of a coordinating body at the national level. However, with international support, the sector-specific safety and health consulting and monitoring services were strengthened. Also, a university “services cell” was created to ensure access to industrial hygiene facilities to conduct hazard assessment, exposure monitoring, guidance in preparation of action plans and trainings at subsidized rates. This author commented that the development of “information hubs” through universities added to the long-term success and sustainability of the project (A.25).

## Diversification of types of services

*How have initiatives resulted in a diversification of the types of services, assistance and/or information being delivered which help people in the target group improve their working and living conditions?*

Some of the papers reviewed commented on the need to diversify services to help people in MSE/IE. For example, the Save the Children Project in the Philippines stressed the long-term benefits of including the community volunteer health workers in the initial research used for project design, the development of training modules and in providing trainings (A.7). Their services were expanded beyond providing basic outreach and health services to low-income communities, and efforts were made to institutionalize these changes within the Philippines Department of Health as part of a way to sustain awareness and activities related to working conditions for the poor.

Some health micro-insurance schemes have expanded their services to include preventive and maternity care training, as well as awareness-raising on reproductive health care, provided by local women health workers in the communities. These services were shown to be important in encouraging women to join health micro-insurance schemes. Incorporating complementary work, such as disease prevention and general health education for the target groups, was also found to be cost-effective and to reduce the general health risk of insured members and/or target groups. The authors commented that extra savings gained from a general reduction of health risk would allow more scope for maternity coverage (A.10).

The issues of expanding the diversity of services can also be extended to income-generation activities geared towards individuals in target groups and efforts to give children a healthful and safe environment. For example, in the early 1990s with funds from a World Bank loan, the Government of Bolivia and ONAMFA (National Organization for Children, Women and the Family) created a network of integrated child development sites in peri-urban areas called *pidis*. Through linkages with other health and education networks, these home-based programmes provided children under the age of 6 food, health care and the attention of two community caregivers. While the *pidi* system created a safe and healthful environment where parents could leave their young children during the day, the teachers in the centres were typically not trained in child care, particularly in how to engage children in educational activities.

In March 1993, ONAMFA and the USAID-funded LearnTech project agreed to experiment with ways to engage young children in active play, and to train caregivers and stimulate early learning activities through interactive radio instruction (IRI) methodology

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(A.14). The following year, an IRI model was created in Bolivia which catered to the specific educational needs of women caregivers with poor literacy skills and minimal training and young children in the poor peri-urban areas served by ONAMFA. The resulting audio series targeted both young children and caregivers.

Chosen by ONAMFA criteria, children who enter a *pidi* are either undernourished or at a high level of nutritional risk, and from a home with working parents with nobody to care for them. The parents are typically construction workers, informal sector workers or maids. Before the *pidis* were opened, if parents wanted to work, some were forced to leave their children unattended. Others took their children into the streets of La Paz to sell candies or commodities. The *pidis* addressed the need for economic viability and child care in the following way:

- Urban-marginalized women work as caregivers of children within their own community. They earn money and learn micro-enterprise management skills.
- Working parents of children attending the *pidis* are assured that their children are well taken care of while they work.

In MSE/IE, particularly rural areas, parents may be forced to take children to work if they do not have a safe place to leave them. This situation potentially exposes children to occupational safety and health hazards and other negative aspects of working and employment conditions. It may also contribute to the perpetuation of child labour, an issue that cuts across all aspects of MSE/IE. Programmes such as *pidis* that support a safe environment and sound educational activities for children of workers may be an important component of an integrated multidisciplinary approach to improving working and employment conditions, particularly as they relate to work-family issues. This programme also gave poor women business skills and the ability to provide high-quality child care. The IRI audiotapes developed by this project are still used today and the model has been adapted to many other countries in South and Central America and Africa.

Other programmes have found success by diversifying services. For example, many of the child labour projects implemented by ILO IPEC include a diversity of services, such as awareness-raising activities to bring child labour issues and programmes to the attention of a community and the entire country to encourage understanding, support and participation. Alternative income generation that makes possible new sources of family income, such as small businesses, is provided so that families are no longer dependent on children's earnings. Alternative production processes to make child labour unprofitable and unnecessary, and educational opportunities are perhaps the most effective direct intervention of all. Accessible, quality, affordable education has proven to be such a strong incentive for withdrawing children from labour and preventing them from entering work, that education forms a part of every IPEC project (A.27).

In Bangladesh, a project to eliminate child labour in the construction industry illustrated how multiple interventions and partnerships are combined in a single effort. In this country, some families, including the youngest children, spend their days breaking rocks into construction gravel. After ILO IPEC completed a data collection survey that identified children working in the construction sector within targeted geographical regions, a local construction company helped arrange classroom space for non-formal education activities for children who had previously had no schooling, in order to prepare them for enrollment in public schools. With the help of project micro-credits, workshop training and NGO support, some of the parents, particularly women, are generating income outside of construction-related activities. Revenues from new businesses compensate for the children's lost earnings so they can attend school. Company representatives, along with parents, teachers and local leaders, belong to a committee that monitors project activities and it is anticipated that they will sustain the activities when the project ends (A.27). The main theme that resonated throughout the report was that the synergy of multiple

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approaches and diversification of services makes successful results possible; this likely applies to efforts to improve working and employment conditions in general.

Finally, in the United States, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is developing several initiatives to improve working conditions for Hispanic workers, many of whom experience language barriers, do not know their rights under American laws, and typically work in high-risk industries and workplaces that are difficult to reach through traditional regulatory means. A partial list of the steps OSHA has taken is given below (A.28).

- Established a Hispanic Workers Task Force dedicated to pursuing creative solutions to improve the agency's outreach to and prevent fatalities among Hispanic workers.
- Added Spanish-speaking capabilities to the OSHA national hotline (1-800-321-OSHA), which receives about 1,000 calls each month.
- Introduced a Spanish Web page ([www.osha.gov/as/opa/spanish/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/as/opa/spanish/index.html)), which has recorded a significant increase in hits (2,500 in February 2002 to over 28,500 in February 2003).
- Launched national public service announcement (PSA) outreach campaigns. For example, one campaign in April 2003 released two PSAs to over 650 Spanish radio stations across the country. One spot was targeted at employees and their families; the other targeted employers. The first month figures show the spots played 93 times reaching 15.2 million listeners. OSHA is following up with additional Spanish language outreach through the Hispanic Radio Network.
- Increased the number of fluent Spanish-speaking employees.
- Awarded six new grants with a Hispanic outreach component that targeted training in ergonomics, construction and institutional competency building, in September 2002.
- Renewed 26 grants with a Hispanic component. These grants targeted topics such as blood-borne pathogens, construction, electrical power generation, transmission and distribution, ergonomics, hard-to-reach workers and institutional competency building.
- Increased the number of training centres to help meet the increased demand for training and provide added value to its outreach efforts, including Spanish language courses.
- Developed alliances and other cooperative relationships at the national and regional level to provide outreach material to the Hispanic community.
- Offered a variety of occupational safety and health programmes in Spanish, including the ten-hour construction course in various OSHA regions.
- Appointed Hispanic coordinators in each region to coordinate activities and serve as the region's liaison to the Agency's Hispanic Task Force and National Office.
- Worked with the 55 Mexican consulates around the nation to promote the Justice and Equality in the Workplace programme.

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The traditional regulatory model of sending inspectors to worksites is not effective enough by itself to improve working conditions among many Hispanic and immigrant workers in the United States. There are too many small-scale activities in which these workers are engaged, many of which are “under the radar screen” of available information. A wide diversity of non-traditional means is needed to reach these workers and their employers. While the overall situation and available resources in the United States differ from developing countries, it is likely that many of the same principles apply. In order to achieve large-scale change among a vast and hard-to-reach population, diverse activities focusing on one main objective may be needed.

## Expansion of the numbers and types of organizations

*How have initiatives resulted in expansion of the numbers and types of organizations that are actively promoting improvements in working and employment conditions in MSEs and/or the informal economy in a sustainable way?*

There are examples in the literature of projects that have included different types of organizations to expand their reach to otherwise hard-to-reach populations. These efforts often must join forces with organizations that focus on separate development disciplines. This type of collaboration can range from the international level to local organizations and intermediaries that represent the interests of specific groups of workers or business owners. Examples from the literature reviewed are discussed below.

Among the many international organizations and donors, both public and private, that have interests in helping the poor, most confine themselves to interaction along sector-specific lines within primary “silos” or groups of organizations with similarly defined interests. Historically, most of these groups do not prioritize the impact of working and employment conditions upon overall human development. The challenge is to break down these barriers and collaborate with diverse groups with previously separate interests and begin to investigate the repercussions of overall social activity upon the state of poverty and development. The relatively recent recognition, promoted by programmes like WISE, that working conditions and productivity are inter-related highlights this point, and collaborative efforts are growing in number and complexity. Still, their absolute number relative to the total number of organizations that engaged those who work in MSEs and the informal economy is relatively small.

Projects that deliberately attempt to take an integrated approach across sectors have found new inroads into ways to improve working and employment conditions and reduce poverty. They are both integrated in terms of the actors that work together across sector interests and the activities that they work with among beneficiaries at the local level. An ILO concept note for technical cooperation supports this comment by stating:<sup>6</sup>

*Stand-alone projects providing direct assistance to a particular group of beneficiaries are unlikely to have sufficient scale.*

Future activities in the area of improving working and employment conditions in MSE/IE that are embedded in, and support, the socio-economic development strategy for a country should be viewed as a means towards an overall development end. When this

<sup>6</sup> ILO: *The informal economy, poverty and employment: An integrated approach* (Geneva, 2003). This technical cooperation project summary outline can be viewed at <http://zope.ilo.org/esd/ksie/resources/documents/documents/Files/RAS03M51UKM.doc>.

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happens, the argument can be made that multidisciplinary teams should collaborate to improve the working and living conditions together with nutrition, educational opportunity and quality health services, the physical infrastructure and environment, housing, sanitation, national and local policy, laws and guidance, access to capital and insurance, business acumen, and so on. The improvement of working and employment conditions can then be integrated into an overall set of criteria where human activity is important to review and understand in an inter-related fashion.

A World Bank report, entitled *Empowerment and poverty reduction: A source book*, stresses that bringing key actors together around integrated interests is vital to programme success (A.1). It states that large-scale change for effective poverty reduction happens when changes occur in the relations among the four key actors: the state, the private sector, civil society and poor people. Project designers who bring them together to listen to each other and work together are key. Each actor has strengths that can complement the strengths of others.

The groups with the greatest interaction with small-scale entrepreneurs are, by far, those that increase availability of capital and provide business development services. However, as mentioned earlier, rarely do they consider working and employment conditions in their efforts. There are exceptions, such as an ILO project that has been working for several years with the Government of Vietnam and a number of its rural health centre networks, research and training institutions, and farmers' associations to develop the Work Improvement for Neighborhood Development (WIND) training package. This package has been used successfully among rural farmers in Vietnam to develop work as a part of everyday activity, offering equal instruction to women and men through husband-wife pairs. As a result, this integrated strategy works with institutions that have a focus in various sectors. It also contributes to a strong network of organizations in Vietnam that may offer opportunities to implement other working and employment conditions programmes and increase the number of potential beneficiaries across sectors. According to the author of a report reviewed, working through different organizations increased coverage and various local channels should be tried and mobilized for future projects (A.3).

In another example, the Save the Children project mentioned previously conducted action research in the Philippines that focused on improving working conditions for informal sector workers through an integrated approach (A.7). The project partnered with community health-care workers and taught them new skills. It also brought in a trade association that previously lacked the tools to improve working conditions for its members. One stated objective of the project was to test the effectiveness of the integration of these two institutions for the delivery of community-based occupational safety and health services, and the authors of the report concluded that the efforts were successful.

An experience in Africa found similar results. The Government of Togo's Grassroots Development Initiatives Project (GDIP) reported that subprojects need to consider and factor in relevant socio-cultural aspects of everyday life in order to inspire and embed change (A.5). The report stated that these subprojects would have a greater developmental impact if they were prepared as part of an inter-related programme on complementary activities.

Numerous institutions and programmes that relate to the informal sector have been established in Ghana (A.4). These include the National Board for Small-Scale Industries, the Fund of Small and Medium Enterprises Development, the Programme of Action for the Mitigation of Social Costs Adjustment, the Ghana Regional Appropriate Technology Industrial Service, TECHNOSERVE, and the Council for Indigenous Business Associations. Institutions such as the Internal Revenue Service, as well as the Metropolitan and District Assemblies, provide the regulatory framework for the operators of the sector.



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According to a report reviewed, the Ghana Trades Union Congress planned to set up a database on the informal economy which would encompass features, needs, composition and geographical profile of the different subsectors. It also planned to set up another database on existing institutions and programmes and their profile for assisting the sector. While a followup report on these initiatives was not found, the stated effort points to the realization that all groups that have the potential to interact with a target audience, no matter what their primary mandates are, should be known and evaluated for possible participation in future projects.

A seminar report on home-based workers in Thailand suggested that large employers and their subcontractors should be involved in the protection schemes for homeworkers, thus demonstrating social responsibility of businesses in labour protection (A.9). It also stated that the government should retrain their labour inspectors to deal better with homeworkers' issues. Concerted efforts of relevant organizations and trained human resources at local levels are essential for success because knowledge of local conditions is crucial. Another suggestion from the seminar was that the government and homeworkers should establish a crafts centre in Bangkok for sharing traditional and new wisdom and attracting tourists to buy local products. This could help promote entrepreneurship development and working and employment conditions as well. The Ministry of Public Health also unfolded plans at the seminar to conduct home visits when OSH risks are identified at local clinics. Initial priority target groups would include pregnant women and children.

In another example of how projects have expanded the number of organizations that have promoted good working and employment conditions, the ILO helped develop sustainable radio programmes in Uganda and Ghana to communicate with local small business audiences (A.13). Market research conducted in these countries by the ILO suggested that radio was by far the most common communication medium used by small enterprise workers and owners, and a large percentage of potential listeners were willing to participate in a call-in radio show if it covered issues central to their business situation. Small enterprise listeners stated that they wanted programmes of substance and wanted the presentation to talk with them, not at them.

The radio programme in Uganda, called *Nekolera Gyange* (I run my own business), was launched in 1999 by the Central Broadcasting Service (CBS) with commercial sponsors and advertisers. The programme is broadcast twice a week during prime time just after the evening news. The demonstration programme cost just US\$ 39,000 to produce. After this initial investment, the programme was self-sustaining and was considered one of CBS's most popular shows. By May 2001, three additional radio stations were broadcasting small enterprise radio programmes similar to *Nekolera Gyange*. Two were on rural stations in Uganda and the other was in the Kumasi region in central Ghana, a concentrated small enterprise area.

Ghana's programme, called *M'adwumayi* (My business), places more emphasis on working conditions issues than does *Nekolera Gyange*. This programme has been identified with the effort to improve working conditions since its seminal first programme launched around the same time as a tragic fire in the Kumasi Market. The radio programme took a leadership role in facilitating a dialogue about fire prevention and safety. In the first show, the presenter explained that the topics would focus on the physical environment and working conditions of small enterprises, and he elaborated on the link between a safe and healthy work environment and a competitive and growing business. Featured topics on working conditions have included such subject matters as:

- safety for people working in restaurants and kitchens;
- prevention of chemical burns and chemical poisoning when handling paint, fertilizers, pesticides, glues and other hazardous chemical substances;

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- safety tips for mechanics.

Another paper that reported on a survey completed in 1993 on the occupational safety and health issues in the informal sector in Dar es Salaam, the United Republic of Tanzania, recommended that, to ensure sustainability of future programmes, the main focus should be on developing the capacity of local NGOs, factory inspection and primary health-care services for taking responsibility for the OSH activities in the informal sector (A.15). The paper reiterated the importance of working with local NGOs and health-care services as mentioned previously. This concept is supported by a different report that provided an overview of the coverage and effectiveness of social protection in Africa and gave recommendations for future action (A.17). According to the author, the basic needs of individuals are the same everywhere, but the means of satisfying these needs are not. The African experience has shown that, rather than create new organizations for tackling socio-economic insecurity, greater emphasis should be placed on respecting, strengthening and developing organizations to which individuals have freely decided to belong. This plan calls for originality and inventiveness to maximally meet the social expectations for the majority of the people.

The paper further states that the ability to respond to opportunities created by globalization depends on an integrated view of interdependent economic and social objectives. This has necessitated an integrated approach to the economic, social and political dimensions of public policy. The traditional compartmentalized approach, which deals with each of these dimensions separately and gives primacy to the economic policies on the assumption that distributional and other political goals can be dealt with later, has proved to be ineffective (A.17).

The Philippines was the first country in Asia and the Pacific region to implement a major national WISE programme. Project WISE was managed by the Bureau of Working Conditions, Department of Labor and Employment, with technical support from the ILO and sponsorship by UNDP. Then cooperating agencies participated in Project WISE: the National Wages and Productivity Commission, the Institute for Labor Studies, the Occupational Safety and Health Center, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Department of Trade and Industry, the UP-Institute for Small-Scale Enterprises, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, the Philippines Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, and the Labor Advisory Consultative Council (A.20).

In reality, Project WISE was integrated into the regular programmes of the partner organizations to varying degrees, but this integration of various influential partners is one reason why WISE in the Philippines was a success. There were 906 participants in comprehensive entrepreneurs' workshops, 1,237 in entrepreneurs' awareness workshops, and 658 in workers' awareness workshops during the project period. The reason the National Seminar on WISE was conducted was to pull together all the WISE experiences throughout the country and for partners to outline future steps in spreading WISE nationwide, while expanding its reach to the informal sector. Furthermore, at the time of the seminar, WISE activities were being integrated into the Philippines Social Reform Agenda (SRA). It was stated in the proceedings that previous surveys had suggested that the WISE approach can be a potent tool to improve the working conditions of workers in the informal economy. Recommendations from the seminar included the following:

- establish sponsorship through a big brother/small brother plan, tapping private sector resources;
- strengthen the capacity of local government units to participate to promote WISE to their localities;

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- support WISE graduates to organize and to conduct forums for other entrepreneurs and workers;
  - intensify the availability of awareness courses for future potential participants;
  - further develop strong linkages/networking with local government, NGOs and grassroots, community-based organizations.

Another possible way to diversify organizations involved in future projects is to look at organizations that promote and provide day-care services for poor people. For example, few poor urban households in Guatemala City currently opt to use public child-care services. However, a survey conducted there suggested that this is because of the low supply (limited number) rather than a lack of demand (A.23). The authors stated that, given its important contribution in enabling mothers to work and their children to be well cared for, an existing public day-care programme called *Hogares Comunitarios* has proven itself worthy of expansion. They also concluded that reducing barriers to obtaining employment is crucial for helping to lift women and their families in the urban slums of Guatemala out of poverty.

Access to reliable and affordable child care can enable mothers to work in settings not compatible with caring for their children and often in higher paying work. Increasing the availability of subsidized formal day care in poor urban areas is a viable option, which can increase the labour participation rates of women, and ensure safe and reliable child care for preschoolers.

Similar to the Bolivian *pidis* project reviewed in this document (A.14), the Guatemalan paper highlights the potential importance of low-cost child-care facilities for the working poor, particularly working women. When no options exist, women are often forced to take their children with them to work. This may expose young children to occupational safety and health hazards, as well as preventing women from obtaining higher paying jobs where children are not allowed. The World Bank has promoted this model of government-subsidized child-care centres in many countries. Besides contributing in a positive way to work-family issues, they may provide an avenue to promote other working conditions issues to the parents that use these facilities (A.23).

Another potential collaborating organization includes business centres (BC) that provide business development services in a private sector-like manner. These have been promoted by many donors and banks worldwide (A.24). The BC is a structure set up to deliver services to entrepreneurs with the aim of strengthening the job creation potential, productivity and competitiveness of MSEs. The paper reviewed explored the risks and benefits of several different BCs, including those established by the ILO, UNIDO, Swisscontact, USAID, IADB and the EU. The focus was on Eastern Europe, but included activities in Ecuador, Peru, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Argentina, Columbia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Business centres are usually NGOs or private enterprises set up under an existing national legal framework that provides BDS directly to MSEs. There is a wide range of names for similar structures, including Enterprise Development Agencies or Centres (EDA, EDC), Business Support or Service Centres (BSC), Local Enterprise Agencies (LEA) and others. Apart from their potential for income and employment generation, BCs could play an important local economic development role by promoting the MSE sector and supporting the setting up of associations that strengthen the voice of micro-entrepreneurs in a given region. The report states that the BCs could be stronger in raising awareness of entrepreneurs that improving labour standards or working conditions can have a positive impact on enterprise productivity and competitiveness (A.24). Business centres may provide an entry point to disseminate working and employment conditions principles to MSEs, particularly if they are framed in a way that promotes productivity and

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competitiveness. These centres have been established in many countries, and it may be worth investigating their reach in target countries for future working conditions projects.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the United States is aggressively developing strategies and promoting programmes that have the potential to disseminate occupational safety and health information to hard-to-reach at-risk workers. The Agency is taking a non-regulatory approach that involves developing alliances with community-based organizations and other groups that interact with these workers (A.28). Some of these organizations, such as faith-based groups, had not previously promoted occupational safety and health.

There are well-known examples of organizations that represent the interests of informal sector workers as well. The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) based in India is the best known example of a membership organization of informal sector micro-entrepreneurs and workers. SEWA spurred the establishment of the National Alliance of Street Vendors in India (NASVI) in 1998, which lobbies for the rights and well-being of all street vendors in the country. A number of organizations outside the subcontinent have been either inspired or cofounded by SEWA:

- the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in Durban, South Africa;
- StreetNet: an international alliance of street vendors ([www.streetnet.org.za](http://www.streetnet.org.za));
- HomeNet: an international alliance of home-based workers ([www.gnapc.org/homenet](http://www.gnapc.org/homenet));
- Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), a global research and policy-making network involving the afore-mentioned groups and their allies in civil society organizations, international agencies and academic institutions ([www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org)).

According to the author of a report on informal food sector workers, a number of occupational safety and health issues related to food vending would be more adequately addressed if vendors were organized and therefore in a more economically and spatially secure position (A.29). The author states that interest in organizing such groups makes it clear that exchanges among developing countries to diffuse the experiences of SEWA and other groups are needed to facilitate the creation of food vendors' organizations where they are needed. Although more research may be needed on the various ways in which these nascent organizations function, generally speaking, more associations like SEWA, SEWU, StreetNet and HomeNet are needed in developing countries to act as collective voices for the working poor. Such organizations can help micro-entrepreneurs access financing and social protection and secure affordable spaces in which to conduct business.

## Sustained improvement among participants

*How have initiatives resulted in sustained improvement in working and employment conditions and/or productivity among participating enterprises, individuals or families?*

There are few impact studies in the literature that have examined the sustained level of improvements made after interventions. One reason is that it is often difficult to do this type of evaluation in an objective, cost-effective manner. Intervention effectiveness

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research is an active area of research for many in academia and other organizations, and practical guides for evaluating impact have been published.<sup>7</sup>

For projects reviewed here, only one was an assessment of impact. The findings from the evaluation of the Start Your Business (SYB) training of women enterprises in Vietnam indicated that it had a positive impact on women in rural areas at two levels (A.11):

- *business*: by increasing business sales and income, employment and other aspects of women's businesses;
- *social*: by increasing women's confidence and decision-making abilities.

Women who participated in SYB training reported increases in sales, income and money for private spending. Nearly 97 per cent of the participants stated that their business performance had improved considerably, and nearly 49 per cent confirmed that their personal income for private spending had increased. After participating in the training, 56 business owners hired new employees, creating a total of 185 new jobs (within the sample).

The SYB training offered women an opportunity to network with other women and to build their confidence. Nearly 90 per cent confirmed that they were more confident in conducting their businesses than before the training, 80 per cent felt more confident in managing their finances, and 76 per cent claimed that they felt more independent in making decisions. After the training, 74 per cent of the participants maintained regular contact with their co-participants by exchanging information on an informal basis. Recommendations offered by the report were the needs to carry out additional targeted impact surveys, increase the sample size of women without businesses (control groups), and use random sampling techniques in future impact studies.

A review by the author in 1997 that documented "success stories" of preselected past participants of WISE trainings in the Philippines identified a number of improvements in working conditions and productivity.<sup>8</sup> Many of the entrepreneurs, managers and workers interviewed stated that the changes implemented after WISE made their places of work better for workers and more profitable. The purpose of documenting success stories was to use them as promotional materials to be disseminated throughout the Philippines to recruit future participants to attend WISE workshops. However, because the selection of participants for the reviews was biased toward enterprises in which it was known that improvements had been made and maintained, the overall impact of WISE in the Philippines is not completely represented by this review.

One of the weaknesses of many development efforts related to working and employment conditions is that long-term impact assessments have not been done, probably because the costs of doing such assessments, potentially years after initial interventions, is not commonly budgeted as part of original projects. Future programmes should be clear on how they will measure success, both short-term and long-term.

<sup>7</sup> For example, *Guide to evaluating the effectiveness of strategies for preventing work injuries: How to show whether a safety intervention really works*, available at <http://www.iwh.on.ca/archives/pdfs/SafetyBk.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Examples of some of the success stories can be found at the following website: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/wise/index.htm>.

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## Sustained improvement among non-participants

*How have initiatives resulted in sustained improvement in working and employment conditions and/or productivity among other enterprises, individuals or families?*

As with the section above, unbiased impact assessment studies are few and far between. None were identified by this review that examined how initiatives resulted in sustained improvements for populations not directly targeted by an intervention. However, radio programmes and social marketing campaigns aim to reach much more widely than training programmes alone. For example, the radio programmes in Uganda and Ghana mentioned previously likely had an impact on entrepreneurs and workers who did not participate directly in the interactive radio programmes. Likewise, ILO SEED has helped initiate social marketing campaigns in various countries to promote “job quality” and has measured their impact on the population’s awareness by administering surveys. The findings from these initial assessments are that indirect participants did make some improvements to their job quality.<sup>9</sup>

## Sustained improvement among vulnerable groups

*How have initiatives resulted in sustained improvement in working and employment conditions for particularly vulnerable groups?*

Some of the reports reviewed targeted particular vulnerable groups, primarily women. None of them specifically focused on the sustainability of improvements, but did discuss current situations and lessons learned and recommendations from firsthand experience. These are reviewed below.

Interventions targeted at women workers illustrated that facilitating the ability for them to network and organize is one of the best ways to give them voice in local dialogue and to improve their situations. One example is related to women food vendors mentioned previously (A.29). The important role of the “informal” food sector (IFS) for the food security of the urban poor is well documented. Knowledge of this diverse sector indicates that selling both raw and prepared foodstuffs in public spaces and in home-based retailing environments is an important livelihood, often for women. The article argues that securing access to urban space – a highly coveted commodity in rapidly growing cities – is a political issue that is best addressed when food micro-entrepreneurs are well organized among themselves. Sustained improvements, such as hygiene, living and working conditions take place with investments in the social capital of food vendors resulting from more effective dissemination of information.

The author of the report argues that in most cities, in order to manage the IFS effectively, a proactive dialogue needs to be established among workers, the municipal authorities and other local stakeholders, such as the police and general public. In addition, recognizing the significant contribution of the informal sector is of crucial importance for gender relations because women’s work is disproportionately located within this sphere. Much of women’s work is therefore invisible to policy-makers, who do not see the informal contribution in most official documentation and statistics.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication with Jim Tanburn and Rie Vejs-Kjeldgaard from the ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (SEED).

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In another report, it was stated that rapid urbanization has meant an increase in the number and percentage of households headed by single women (A.23). Almost one-quarter of the households in Guatemala City are now headed by a woman. Because at least half of these urban female-headed households are poor, this group is particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and needs help with employment opportunities and child-care opportunities. The share of urban women who work for an income in Guatemala increased to 28 per cent in 1999, 20 per cent more than at the beginning of the decade. Low-income mothers are even more likely to work for pay – 37 per cent – according to the IFPRI survey. They tend to be poorer than non-working mothers and more likely to be of indigenous ethnicity.

The majority – 63 per cent – of urban Guatemalan women workers hold jobs in the informal sector where they work in petty trading, domestic service, tortilla shops and other eateries. Formal sector employment opportunities are growing in the country, but the lack of available child care limits the ability of many women to take advantage of better paying jobs where children cannot accompany their mothers to work. As a result, many single women heading households have little choice but to work in the informal sector, despite low pay, because it offers them the flexibility to care for their children while they work. Over 40 per cent of the randomly selected mothers working in the slums of Guatemala City cared for their children themselves while working for pay. This study argued that the provision of inexpensive and quality day care for children of poor families, particularly those headed by women who are single breadwinners, is needed to help lift them out of poverty (A.29).

The boundaries between work and home are often minimal among poor women, and the quality of working conditions can have broad and substantial repercussions upon the health and well-being of individuals and their families. For women who are single breadwinners, the conditions of work have even greater consequence, as they often do not have the same rights and authority over property, income, knowledge and basic social rights for themselves and their families. Programmes that strive to diminish the vulnerabilities of women who both work and provide the basic needs of families have the potential to reduce poverty and financial risk; improve health, nutrition, sanitation and education for adults and children; minimize the risk factors associated with hazardous child labour; and create an environment where the needs of work can be balanced with the needs of families. Creating better working conditions for this population reaps benefits for the family and the community.

Women in poorer countries lag behind men in access to property, credit, modern avenues of education, skills development, technology and knowledge. They often find themselves in the least protected, lowest paid sectors and jobs. Women are disproportionately affected by the difficulties of balancing work and family, and are particularly vulnerable to workplace abuse, including sexual harassment. These factors often translate into an acceptance of miserable working and employment conditions with few avenues for improving their own situation.

Among working women, those who are single breadwinners arguably endure the worst conditions at work and have the fewest opportunities to improve their situation. Many are homeworkers in order to balance household and family responsibilities. In some cultures, widows or single women with children are outcast socially and legally from many of the activities that afford power over their own lives and those of their children. Most have few opportunities for more formal, higher paying work and their children may be at a higher risk of engaging in hazardous work than children in other family situations. More practical programmes that promote positive change are needed to make a difference in the lives of these women and their families.

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## Significant impact on the “worst” problems

*How have initiatives made a significant impact on the “worst” working and employment conditions problems among participating enterprises, individuals or families (including providing a definition and rationale for why these conditions are considered the “worst”)?*

Little information is available in the literature on programmes that have effectively addressed the “worst” forms of working and employment conditions among workers in MSE/IE. Workers highly exposed to hazardous chemical substances, or those working at heights, are clearly among the most at risk. Others who are sexually abused or who experience violence in the workplace also fall into this category. But the lines between “worst” and “not worst” are often thin, and there have been few attempts to make distinctions. Many factors play into defining “worst”, including social and cultural realities as well as work practices and opportunities for employment. For example, the “worst” working and employment conditions in the Netherlands may be very different than those in India, if such comparisons were required to be made.

Many of the child labour efforts conducted by ILO IPEC focus on the “worst” forms of child labour, including “hazardous” work (A.27). ILO Convention No. 182 requires adopting countries to identify and minimize these situations. However, developing easy-to-understand lists of the worst forms of hazardous child labour has not been easy and is an active area of interest by researchers and practitioners alike. The same problems would occur for adult workers if there were strict requirements to identify the “worst” working and employment conditions country by country.

Many of the past training programmes, such as WISE, have resulted in noticeable improvements in at least some of the participants’ worksites. These improvements are usually simple, low-cost and easy to implement, and result in increases in productivity as well as better working conditions. Improvements typically include better lighting and general ventilation, improved organization of workspaces or materials handling, placing covers on chemical containers, providing clean drinking water, allowing more rest breaks, and so on. However, the extent to which WISE and similar programmes have affected the “worst” working and employment conditions is not known.

As mentioned in a previous section, support of local university students, working with professors involved in working and employment conditions issues related to the poor, could be one avenue to expand our recognition of particularly hazardous conditions and the types of MSE/IE worksites with which they are associated. These groups could also be instrumental in documenting “best practices” from similar worksites that have managed to mitigate hazards and develop context-appropriate training modules.

## Changes to policy or regulatory framework for MSE/IE development

*How have initiatives resulted in changes to the policy or regulatory framework for MSE/informal economy development or for working and employment conditions?*

This question raises an important issue: that is, how do programmes go beyond participation of workers and entrepreneurs and those that interact with them to achieve empowerment and policy change? The World Bank report included in this review provides many recommendations from past projects that in theory may help answer this question



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(A.1). The following are some of the recommendations given in the report for future programmes designed to help poor people.

- ***Champions and alliances in country bring about change.*** Almost every case of large-scale change involves innovators in country, both within and outside government. Innovations and support for policy reform spread when alliances are built across classes and sectors. Innovations also get internalized best through peer learning and horizontal exchanges, such as between ministries, mayors or communities. Outsiders have important roles to play in supporting this process and disseminating information across boundaries.
- ***Bringing key actors together is vital.*** Large-scale change for effective poverty reduction happens when changes occur in the relations among the four key actors: the state, the private sector, civil society and poor people. Policy and institutional design forums that bring them together to listen to each other and work together are key. Each actor has strengths that can complement the strengths of others.
- ***Poor people's membership-based organizations are overlooked.*** In many parts of the world, poor women and men have organized beyond communities into federated networks with representation at the national level. Such networks include producers' and farmers' associations, slum dwellers' networks and trade unions. These organizations, as well as other civil society organizations such as business management institutes and chambers of commerce, are important actors that need to be part of policy dialogue and project implementation where appropriate.
- ***Changes in rules and institutional processes enable large-scale change.*** The poverty reduction challenge is to bring about change on a large scale. This implies replicating successful experiences. This, in turn, requires changes in the enabling policy and regulatory regimes that are informed by successes, failures, poor people's experiences and institutional realities. Changing rules is not enough. Implementing new rules requires educating stakeholders at all levels, including governmental officials, about the new rules and getting buy-in; acknowledging the need for changes in values and behaviours; supporting institutional capacity to implement and manage change processes; ensuring public accountability; and monitoring, evaluating and refining the rules based on experience.

While the World Bank report did not specifically address working and employment conditions, the lessons learned likely apply to any effort to affect widespread change in MSE/IE. The findings support the need for increased delivery/supply of services, assistance, information, diversity of types of services, and numbers and types of organizations that actively promote improvements and the importance of policy on outcome.

In another report that discusses policy change, a mission was described with the purpose of laying the basis for the implementation of the Decent Work Pilot Programme in Ghana. Of the various findings and recommendations made, one stood out as being directly related to this section. The authors suggest that assistance and capacity building for ILO constituents on policy formulation and dialogue is perceived to be important for the informal economy. In Ghana, as in many other countries, the informal economy is affected by many macro policies, often in negative ways that expand and perpetuate the informal economy as a poverty trap. There is a need for an explicit informal economic strategy that would take these policy linkages into account and include a set of measures contributing to poverty reduction and pro-poor growth in the informal economy (A.18).

In another example of the recognition of the importance of policy and legal framework on large-scale change, a primary purpose of the seminar in Thailand on home-based workers was to contribute to improved working conditions through policy

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development and coordinated action by governmental and non-governmental organizations (A.9). Likewise, the national seminar in the Philippines on WISE discussed how that programme can be effectively integrated into the Philippines Social Reform Agenda (A.20). It was stated in the proceedings for the seminar that previous surveys have suggested that the WISE approach can be a potent tool to improve the working conditions of workers in the informal economy, and it should be acknowledged at the highest levels of government and policy.

Finally, street vendors are present in most cities, yet few governments have developed policies to recognize and articulate their rights. In December 2003, the Government of India adopted a National Policy on Street Vendors that officially recognizes workers in this sector. Organizations such as SEWA, StreetNet, WIEGO and the National Alliance of Street Vendors in India (NASVI), helped to establish this policy (A.29).

## Changes to other aspects of the macro environment

*How have initiatives resulted in changes to other aspects of the macro environment that affect working and employment conditions in MSEs and the informal economy?*

This section is differentiated from the section directly preceding it in that it includes changes to the infrastructure and physical environment that could affect working and employment conditions. This issue was not covered well in most of the documents reviewed, but one report by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) on the role of agriculture to improve the livelihood for poor people did discuss the topic (A.2).

The document proposes that DFID and other development agencies adopt a new role, one that emphasizes realizing rights through creating opportunities for the poor, especially women. The report states that the crucial challenge is to ensure that agricultural growth takes place, and that small-scale farmers, entrepreneurs and workers with low incomes participate fully in it. A specific challenge is to incorporate the lessons of good practices learned so far at the macro level into mainstream policy and action. This process is likely to include the reform of policies, institutions and laws to improve poor people's access to land, markets and services. It may require revitalization of a whole range of services and reconfiguration of existing public institutions to accommodate a different role for government.

The report emphasizes that there are still questions as to whether, in a market-led environment, the various threads "hang together" sufficiently to deliver maximum benefit in terms of better livelihoods, sustainable development and poverty reduction. The authors maintain that these questions will not be answered by policy research by development agencies or the international community. Development of new ideas can happen only on the ground, supported by regional and international lessons learned. The DFID proposes to work with partners, under the leadership of governments committed to poverty reduction, to tackle the issues raised in the paper.

The report's aim is to stimulate discussion within and outside the DFID. Its purpose is to demonstrate that there is a case for taking specific interest in agriculture. According to the authors, many poverty reduction papers stress the importance of agriculture, but few suggest how to make it perform better. Finally, the report outlines several ways in which agriculture growth can reduce poverty and inequality.

According to the report, at a macro level, high transportation costs are a particular barrier to trade. For one-third of all African countries, transportation costs account for

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more than 25 per cent of the total value of exports; for Uganda, they exceed 70 per cent. Other factors that reduce the effectiveness of markets include:

- the relatively high cost of contracting with many small producers;
- the absence of grades and standards;
- poor market information;
- weak contract enforcement.

Arrangements that can overcome some of these barriers include the establishment of:

- commodity exchanges;
- contract farming;
- farmers' organizations/cooperatives;
- quality management schemes, traceability systems and codes of practice;
- local storage facilities to improve stability of food suppliers and overcome boom and bust cycles;
- capacity of producers to analyze market opportunities for themselves;
- franchising of monopoly marketing agencies.

Selected recommendations in the report include:

- Supporting governments and building capacity to develop a vision for agriculture that goes beyond the "Ministry of Agriculture".
- Building capacity and supporting advocacy of civil society groups and the private sector, including farmers' organizations, as a means of building a voice in political, institutional and policy reform processes (such as land reform processes).
- Engaging with organizations that set policies, rules, standards and norms that shape agricultural opportunities for poor people.
- Promoting lesson-learning and developing tools to help policy-makers (donors and governments) carry forward a vision of agricultural development, taking account of the dynamic changes being experienced.

While not specifically addressing working and employment conditions, the report highlights the importance of the "macro-environment" on promoting development and the reduction of poverty, stating that this is likely to include reform of policies, institutions and laws to improve people's access to land, markets and services. The report supports the concept that development of new ideas can happen more efficiently with input at the local level, combined with regional and international lessons learned.

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## Achievement of broader social goals

*How have initiatives had an impact on the achievement of broader social goals (within participating enterprises, individuals or families), including poverty reduction, gender equality and business development?*

One fundamental question arises here. Should working and employment conditions be viewed as a way to affect development by itself, or rather as set of objectives that should be considered simultaneously with other development issues such as health, poverty, women's issues or education?

The working and living conditions in the informal sector are inseparable. The only way to make lasting improvements is to improve infrastructure and basic services in urban poor areas (A.7). Two projects included in this review cover access to quality and affordable child care as one way to help poor workers, particularly women, secure better jobs (A.14 and A.23). Another paper identified common needs that are differential among the various groups of informal sector workers, rural and urban. They include:

- **social needs:** job security, health-care facilities and the promotion of occupational safety and health, protective clothing, protection against income losses during sickness, annual leave and maternity rights, minimum wage, general infrastructure and environmental sanitation;
- **economic needs:** training and education for skills development, basic tools, business premises, financial credit and marketing opportunities (A.4).

In Africa, a pilot survey in Dar es Salaam found that the common roots of many working and employment conditions problems related to poverty, insecurity of land tenure, poor education, lack of institutional support and weak organization (A.15).

Other interesting results refer to the activities developed by groups of business men and women who participated in WISE workshops. For example, in Chile, ex-WISE participants founded a business circle called "Synergy". Their activities included mutual advice to continue improving working conditions and productivity, the exchange of commodities and industrial processes, the exploration of new business opportunities including exports, further training, obtaining business credits and other business development activities (A.19).

Another report discussed the growing health-care schemes for the informal sector, whose workers have traditionally "been left to fend for themselves". Employees and other people in the informal sector depend on their daily-spent physical energies to earn daily wages to feed themselves and their extended families. These workers are indirectly denied access to health care because they typically cannot afford services. In a pilot project formed by a non-profit NGO called the Tanzanian Occupational Health Institute (TOHS), individual entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector cannot join; they must join as groups. To date, 758 workers and family members have joined the scheme. The author states that health-care schemes should go hand-in-hand with promotion of measures to prevent disease, and the scheme is actively promoting activities to improve working conditions (A.22).

Future activities in the area of improving working and employment conditions in MSE/IE should be embedded in, and support, the socio-economic development strategy for a country. These should be objectives that are considered simultaneously with other development issues related to the poor.

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## Relationships of past and current programmes to the ILO's aims for future programmes

*What are the strengths and weaknesses of past and current programmes with reference to the ILO's aims for future programmes, particularly in the areas of the choice of target groups, the choice of technical subject areas addressed, and the mechanisms for improving working and employment conditions?*

This paper has identified five key components of strategies that appear consistently in successful programmes in the literature.

1. ***A comprehensive programme strategy based on sound research.*** Successful programmes consistently articulate a comprehensive and well-organized strategy based on sound and targeted research. This strategy promotes the consolidation or definition of appropriate target audiences.
2. ***An integrated approach.*** Project activity in successful programme designs is often woven across the concerns and operations of many organizations and activities that interact with workers involved in MSE/IE and are integrated into different types of development programmes.
3. ***An assessment and attempt to build demand.*** Many successful programmes actively assess and build demand for improved knowledge and change where there has often been ignorance or complacency.
4. ***A reliance on specific intermediary organizations and change agents.*** Specific intermediary organizations and change agents, such as business associations, community-based organizations and local government units, generally play a key role in implementing programmes. These change agents may emerge from newly consolidated or defined target audiences and are important for sustained delivery of services.
5. ***An explicit effort to achieve win-win outcomes.*** In most cases, the desired outcome is framed as a win-win experience for implementing organizations and for business owners and workers.

Past projects have not consistently collaborated with groups that have separate development interests to begin to investigate the repercussions of overall social activity upon the state of poverty and development. These collaborative efforts are potentially important to the successful implementation of project activity on the ground and can mediate change in supportive policy or other macro conditions. They can also help apply pressure when there are substantial obstacles to improved working and employment conditions.

Another weakness, as pointed out by the World Bank report reviewed, is that poor people's membership-based organizations are often overlooked. These organizations, along with other civil society organizations, are important actors that need to be part of policy dialogue and project implementation where appropriate (A.1). Past projects have not always taken into account the wide diversity of these organizations interacting with target populations when implementing strategies to promote change.

In the area of agriculture, the DFID report mentions that, when serious barriers to project success are considered simultaneously, arrangements can be made to overcome them (A.2). This includes thoroughly evaluating the factors from the micro level to the

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macro level that can have an effect on selected target groups before main interventions in technical subject areas are started.

Another issue is the data collection capabilities that most projects employ before interventions begin. The capacity of national level surveys in most countries to accurately paint a picture of MSE/IE is usually limited. Most small-scale enterprises, and particularly those operating in the informal economy, are invisible to national surveys. SIMPOC, the statistical arm of ILO IPEC, is improving this situation in its efforts to work with governments to characterize child labour and identify potential target groups and geographic areas to address the worst forms of child labour (A.27). These efforts should be expanded and used for working and employment conditions projects.

According to one author of a report reviewed, we will certainly have to continue to rely on the results of small-scale fieldwork, at least to add depth to the information gathered through large-scale surveys (A.6). An example of a focused survey on informal sector workers that provided very useful information to identify target groups and their needs was a baseline pilot survey on OSH status of typical worksites in Dar es Salaam (A.15). The findings of the survey can be summarized as follows:

- Most of the operators and workers in the informal sector studied were primary school leavers. Only a few had completed secondary education.
- The majority had acquired their trade skills on the job with very few having attended vocational training schools.
- Awareness of the various OSH problems was lacking.
- The gap in knowledge and information resulted in the lack of initiatives of operators and workers to take preventive measures or to make conscious efforts in safety and health matters.
- Workers in the informal sector are exposed to a multiplicity of difficulties in their working environment. The absence of appropriate policies and protective measures compounds their vulnerability to hazards.

This type of preliminary information is not easy to obtain but, when it is done well, it can help guide the ILO's direction towards future programmes.

## Participants in programmes acting as change agents

*Have participants in programmes acted as change agents, resulting in the spread of working and employment conditions improvements to other enterprises, individuals or families? If so, what are the characteristics of these participants and how did the spread of improvements take place?*

One way to have participants in programmes act as change agents is to start locally and create ways for the stakeholders to influence the current state of affairs at a higher level. This is illustrated by the Government of Togo Grassroots Development Initiatives Project (A.5). Through the Federation of NGOs in Togo, the project provided direct assistance to NGOs who were the key implementation partners at the local level, and strengthened their capacity to prepare, implement and manage community-level projects. These groups acted as change agents at the local level and, when combined, had a national impact.

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For the Save the Children project in the Philippines, community volunteer health workers acted as the change agents (A.7). They interacted with informal sector home-based *retaso* workers through their normal activities and were given the knowledge and skills to recommend simple, low-cost ways to improve working conditions. They participated in data collection research and training programmes and “owned” a piece of the final product.

The WISE programme in the Philippines used methods to recognize local champions through documented testimonies, awards and accreditation (A.20). These efforts help spread the implementation of improvements for other entrepreneurs to join future WISE programmes.

Other projects utilized groups to act as change agents. The common thread among them was to educate these change agents about working and employment conditions and how they relate to business success, and to recognize and promote participants who could act as role models.

A major question for this section was trying to identify the characteristics of the change agents or champions, so that future programme designers could know better whom to focus efforts on, but the literature has not helped much with this. Hopefully, when project reports are written in the future, the issue of how to recognize and approach change agents and champions will be specifically addressed.

## Design issues for specific target groups

*To what extent have past and current programmes tailored their strategies or technical content to specific target groups, such as women, specific subsectors or according to the size of enterprises? Why? For what types of working and employment conditions improvements? Has tailoring increased the effectiveness of these programmes? How?*

Most of the programmes that were reviewed tailored their efforts to specific target groups, but these groups were defined in different ways. Sometimes the instruments used to reach them were generic and were used across sectors. Other times, they were tailor-made for specific sectors. The ILO WISE training programme has been used widely throughout the world for a diversity of industries. Many of its concepts apply to universal working conditions issues that could be present at any worksite. In the Philippines, WISE was originally aimed at employers with ten to 99 employees (A.20). As the project matured, it was adapted with new modules that targeted new areas, such as the environment. It also developed sector-specific materials for four sectors, and the general WISE manual was subsequently complemented with a version designed specifically for the garment sector. Its concepts were also expanded to the informal sector. The WISE project mentioned previously, that resulted in publication of the I-WEB materials, was deliberately subsector-specific. The report concluded that, in the Philippines, training courses that integrated working conditions with other business topics created the most impact in working conditions. The Nepali and Malaysian training spent relatively more time on productivity and physical environment topics. A future course could create a more balanced impact by integrating the topics, but allowing sufficient time for discussions of working conditions and productivity. Courses with more subsector-specific information provided entrepreneurs with the most useful suggestions for improving their enterprises (A.30).

The Save the Children project adopted many of the principles used by WISE, but developed a new training package focused specifically on the needs of one set of informal sector workers (A.7). In addition, the project report stated that, because of the cost of

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research and project implementation, it would be helpful to designate priority informal sector industries for study based on a large and growing number of workers and growing market demand. The NGOs that work with informal sector associations can coordinate research by facilitating cooperation between researchers and trade associations.

The WIND project in Vietnam specifically includes husband/wife pairs in its training of rural farmers. The project recognizes that living conditions and working conditions are one and the same for these workers. It was felt that, to make lasting changes, both household heads should work together and learn the same tools to potentially improve their situations (A.3). Another author concludes that, in view of the size and scope of the informal sector and the very wide range of working and employment conditions problems confronting workers in different activities, approaches to improving the situation must be well targeted to the needs of particular groups of workers. These can include subsector-specific, enterprise-based strategies, as well as community-based strategies (A.6). Furthermore, strategies that rely heavily on external expertise will not lead to widespread improvement. Efforts are needed to produce technical guidance that is adapted to the situation, problems and needs of particular groups of informal sector workers. This, in turn, will promote the effective use of action-oriented programmes, since these will necessarily depend on the informal sector operators and workers themselves being – and feeling – equipped to tackle their own problems.

Formative evaluation was critical to developing at least one of the programmes reviewed (A.14), that focused on providing skills to day-care providers and education for children under their care. According to the authors, the programmes are effective tools because they were tested and retested several times. Forty caregivers and 285 children used them for six months. Feedback was solicited from caregivers, parents, regional and national teams, and external evaluators. Within the design team, “we brainstormed, we assessed, we complained and we negotiated. When we had to, we threw away our adult ideas of what interests children and went back to the *pidis* [day-care centres] to observe”. Radio programmes, originally produced in Spanish, were later translated into the two main indigenous languages in Bolivia, and coverage was greatly increased.

The authors’ strong recommendation for formative evaluation as a key to success likely extends beyond programmes related to early child development and interactive radio instruction. Future programmes with working and employment conditions components may benefit from re-evaluating themselves in midstream and “throwing away” external ideas about what interests operators and workers in MSE/IE.

The child labour projects also tailor their resources to specific target groups, usually identified by improving the data collection capabilities in host countries. Data collection establishes the basis for selecting and shaping a programme’s direct interventions. Through ILO IPEC’s SIMPOC, central statistical offices in several countries have conducted household surveys that yield national estimates on the number of working children. SIMPOC rapid assessment surveys, conducted by in-country research teams, employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the nature and extent of hazardous and exploitative child labour. Baseline surveys also use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to provide benchmark information for a specific target population. This information is later used for identification of target groups, programme design, implementation and monitoring (A.27).

Not all programmes have targeted specific subgroups, however, sometimes reaching for broad audiences such as “small enterprises”. For example, the radio programmes in Uganda and Ghana mentioned earlier, which have included content related to working and employment conditions, have targeted wide and general audiences within the realm of small enterprises rather than specific subgroups (A.13). Many microfinance and similar interventions have also focused on a wide range of target groups.



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## Roles of institutions

*What types of institutions (private, public and civil society) have taken on which roles in past and current programmes? What have been the strengths and weaknesses of various institutions vis-à-vis the roles they performed?*

A variety of institutions have taken on different roles in previous projects related to working and employment conditions. These roles have ranged from giving access to target populations to providing training and other support. Examples include ministries of labour and health, chambers of commerce, rural and urban health centre networks, research and training institutions, farmers' and trade associations, labour unions, various NGOs, and other local and international organizations. Their strengths and weaknesses have varied, depending on the role they played in project implementation and on a variety of external factors. Several examples of types of partners are given below, along with comments related to strengths and weaknesses in the given situations.

In a discussion related to improving OSH conditions in small-scale radiator repair shops in the United States, specifically reducing exposure to lead, the authors report that relevant sources of information and influence for radiator repair shop owners include the following (A.8):

- Trade associations, which are a credible source of information about trends affecting the industry.
- The suppliers of lead. For some shops, the supplier's sales representative may be the most consistent and personal contact available to make owners and workers aware of potential health and safety hazards and of the availability of low-cost technology to reduce exposures.
- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration through consultative programmes and production of outreach materials.
- Occupational health clinics, which can multiply the effects because they are in contact with affected owners and workers. Clinics can publicize their findings through the cooperation of trade associations and, perhaps, the suppliers of lead.

While this paper is focused on the United States, radiator repair shops are notorious for exposing workers and their families (through lead carried home on skin and clothing) worldwide. It is likely that many of the same types of institutions mentioned above apply in one form or another to radiator repair shop workers in developing countries.

In Thailand, the Office of Home Workers and the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Public Health, HomeNet Thailand, and the National Institute for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (NICE) all came together to discuss how best to improve working and employment conditions among home-based workers in a national seminar in cooperation with the ILO (A.9). Each party had something different to offer, and the conference formed an integrated dialog on what could be done to improve services for these workers.

The ILO Start and Improve Your Business training programme has been running in Vietnam in collaboration with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) to help develop a national long-term training resource and skills development capability and reflect the needs and capabilities of small-scale private enterprises (A.11). Working with the VCCI helps to nationalize the programme and bring in participants for trainings. The

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ILO Work Improvements in Neighbourhood Development training programme has also partnered with research and training institutions and farmers' associations. One collaborator on the WIND project stated that working through different organizations increases the coverage, and various local channels should be tried and mobilized for future projects (A.3).

Organizations of workers and entrepreneurs have also been important partners for past projects, and their importance for future efforts should not be overlooked. In 2001, Harvard University hosted a workshop with the goal of exploring the various unions, cooperatives and advocacy networks that concentrate their efforts on the informal economy in developing countries. The conference organizers stated that, over a decade ago, scholars argued that most organizations of informal workers crumbled rapidly, after perhaps two or three years of activity. There is today a growing recognition that the organization of informal workers may be a more permanent feature of the contemporary economic landscape (A.12).

The oldest trade union of women in the informal sector comes from India and represents perhaps 250,000 members. Founded in 1972, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has inspired several emulators abroad, including the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) of South Africa. The International Labour Organization collaborates extensively with SEWA in developing programmes and forms of inquiry into the informal economy. Meanwhile, UNITE in North America and the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union (TCFUA) of Australia have taken up the cause of home-based workers. There are a variety of cooperatives and advocacy networks in many nations that have allowed informal workers a modicum of voice and visibility. The international alliances of home-based workers and street vendors mentioned earlier (called, respectively, HomeNet and StreetNet), as well as the global network WIEGO, are the most recent manifestations (A.12).

It may be useful to involve UNITE, TCFUA and HomeNet in future large-scale projects focused on homeworkers, as they likely have grassroots ties to organizations that interact with potential target groups. Furthermore, the primary goal of the Harvard workshop to examine a variety of organizations that concentrate their efforts on the informal economy may be worth replicating at the national and local level whenever a project is planned.

In the Philippines, the Bureau of Working Conditions, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), with technical support from the ILO and sponsorship by UNDP, successfully institutionalized the WISE training programme into the activities of its labour inspectorate (A.20). They also involved many other institutions that helped make the project an ongoing success. These included the National Wages and Productivity Commission, the Institute for Labor Studies, the Occupational Safety and Health Center, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Department of Trade and Industry, the UP-Institute for Small-Scale Enterprises, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, the Philippines Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, and the Labor Advisory Consultative Council. However, in other countries where only the ministry of labour was involved with recruitment and delivery of WISE trainings, the projects typically were not sustainable. In government bureaucracies, it is often difficult to add new tasks, such as running WISE programmes, to staff who already have many job responsibilities. And if these tasks are not viewed as contributing in a major way to their end-of-the-year performance evaluations, the motivation to conduct such tasks will not be high. The Philippines WISE project appeared to overcome some of these obstacles by making WISE a major part of the labour inspectors' job and changing the culture of the agency.

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A report that discussed donor involvement in business development services activities stated that donors need to ensure accountability in the use of their funds and are often focused on the broader social and economic objectives of employment, enterprise competitiveness and poverty alleviation. While these donors work extensively with BDS providers and facilitators, it is unrealistic to expect that they will undertake project evaluations that are not relevant to their operations. This often means that the cost of measuring the impact of BDS programmes on market development or social/economic impact must be borne by donors (A.26). This comment likely applies to future working and employment conditions projects as well.

The ILO IPEC child labour projects typically follow a path consistent with the ILO's own tripartite composition. Programmes frequently partner with governments, employers and workers. Projects always have the support of host country governments. Non-governmental organizations serve as implementing agencies and occasionally provide financial or initial planning assistance. Partnerships with community-based organizations integrate the efforts of newly created and existing citizens groups to combat child labour. The involvement of volunteers and contributors multiplies an effort's impact. Finally, employer organizations take an active part in awareness raising, monitoring, and education (A.27).



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## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

This paper reviewed literature related to promoting working and employment conditions for women and men working in micro and small enterprises and the informal economy. It analyzed the literature through a lens of which approaches and strategies have been most successful in reaching vulnerable populations, changing working and employment conditions, institutionalizing change within practice and policy, and sustaining this change over time.

One main conclusion from the exercise is that we have a long way to go to fully understand the best practices for implementing working and employment conditions projects in MSE/IE. The operational definition of working and employment conditions is broad and, of the reports identified, few included more than one or two aspects of the definition.

Few documents were found that described interventions that specifically focused on working and employment conditions for people in MSE/IE. Occupational safety and health was the most commonly addressed subject area. No projects were identified that focused on sexual harassment or violence issues. Intervention methods for these topics may need to be further researched and pilot studies conducted to examine the feasibility of different approaches.

The issue of “sustainability” was one of the main questions asked prior to writing this literature review. Only two reports identified for the review attempted to measure sustainability after project funds ended. More preplanning for follow-up activities to measure issues related to sustainability is needed when new projects are being designed.

Creating demand for services and creating demand for providing services by key partners were identified as key objectives for future projects. The literature suggested that the following important areas need to be addressed to establish and possibly sustain demand for change in working and employment conditions.

- Collect preliminary data.
- Distinguish between “perceived needs” and “real needs”.
- Focus efforts locally.
- Find a local “champion”.
- Create an environment for workers and micro-entrepreneurs to form or join networks or associations.

As with demand for services, there are several recommendations from past projects that increase the potential for sustained delivery of services after primary donor involvement ends.

- Work with and raise awareness among potential partners about working and employment conditions and how the improvements can positively affect business success.
- Design interventions, based on initial research, that meet the demands of the individuals they are meant to reach.
- Keep the visibility of donor involvement in projects to a minimum to ease the transition from direct involvement to sustained delivery of services.

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- Expand partner organizations beyond a federal government agency, because government officials might not be in the best position to sustain services.
  - Clearly specify what aspect(s) of working and employment conditions are being targeted.
  - Promote university-based information hubs to build a local knowledge that has the potential to last long after donor funding ends.

Past projects have not consistently collaborated with groups that have separate development objectives. These collaborative efforts are potentially important to the successful implementation of project activity on the ground and can mediate change in supportive policy or other macro conditions. They can also help apply pressure when there are substantial obstacles to improved working and employment conditions. Future programmes should strive to collect preliminary information on all potential collaborating organizations that may interact with those in MSE/IE and clearly define strategies to obtain buy-in from them.

Programmes that strive to improve conditions at work also have the potential to reduce poverty and financial risk. Such programmes may improve health, nutrition, sanitation and education for adults and children, and create an environment where the needs of work can be balanced with the needs of families. Project designers who target poor people should recognize the importance of working and employment conditions on their overall development objectives. Likewise, designers of working and employment conditions projects may need to combine their efforts with other development initiatives that are perceived to be more immediately important to target populations in order to be successful.

Stand-alone projects providing direct assistance to a particular group of beneficiaries are unlikely to have significant scale or impact on the most pressing working and employment conditions issues. They are also less likely to be sustainable than those based on an integrated approach. Project activity in successful programme designs is often woven across the concerns and operations of many organizations and activities that interact with workers involved in MSE/IE and are integrated into different types of development programmes. This approach appears essential to truly improve the working and employment conditions (and lives) of women and men in micro and small enterprises and the informal economy.

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## Appendix: Summaries of literature reviewed

This annex provides a list of the literature reviewed with summaries structured by the name of the article, the country(ies) of focus, background information and objectives of the paper, lessons learned and/or recommendations given, and a brief comments section.

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### A.1 Empowerment and poverty reduction

D. Narayan (ed.): “Chapter 3: Applying empowerment principles”, in *Empowerment and poverty reduction: A sourcebook* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 2002), pp. 31-69.

#### Country

Global

#### Background and objective

The four elements of empowerment – information, inclusion/participation, accountability and local organizational capacity – can be combined to create more effective, responsive, inclusive and accountable institutions. Such institutions enable poor people to develop their own capacities, increase their assets and move out of poverty.

This chapter draws on the World Bank’s operational experience, while also including some non-Bank experiences, to illustrate actions that the Bank can support directly or enable others to undertake. It applies the empowerment framework to five important areas for poverty reduction:

- access to basic services;
- improved local governance;
- improved national governance;
- pro-poor market development;
- access to justice and legal aid.

#### Lessons learned and recommendations

The chapter offers the ten broad lessons that have been learned across very different contexts. According to the authors, these should be kept in mind when considering an empowering approach to development in any context.

1. *Respect, trust, and social relations matter.* Development policy is not an exact science. The best technical ideas have to be communicated, owned and defended within a given country. It takes time, skills, resources and patience to build consensus and trust. Without this investment in participatory processes, agreements remain fragile as key actors who have opposed each other in the past have little opportunity to build trust or confidence in each other. Breakdown of agreements interferes with reform processes and feeds narrow political opportunism.
2. *Participatory processes and conflict management go together.* Participatory processes that bring different stakeholder groups together to make decisions about setting priorities, changing rules and allocating resources are by definition potentially conflictual. Therefore, participatory processes should have clearly defined rules of engagement, as well as rules and mechanisms for resolving conflict and disagreements, that are known and agreed to by all.

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3. *Champions and alliances in country bring about change.* Almost every case of large-scale change involves innovators in country, both within and outside government. Innovations and support for policy reform spread when alliances are built across classes and sectors. Innovations also get internalized best through peer learning and horizontal exchanges, such as between ministries, mayors or communities. Outsiders have important roles to play in supporting this process and disseminating information across boundaries.
  4. *Bringing key actors together is vital.* Large-scale change for effective poverty reduction happens when changes occur in the relations between the four key actors: the state, the private sector, civil society and poor people. Policy and institutional design forums that bring them together to listen to each other and work together are key. Each actor has strengths that can complement the strengths of others.
  5. *Four empowerment elements act in synergy.* Access to timely and understandable information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and investment in local organizational capacity all reinforce each other to deliver better poverty reduction outcomes. While much progress has been made on participation, the other three principles — investment, access to information, downward accountability mechanisms and local organizational capacity — may be even more important. Work in these areas will need to be refined over time through action learning.
  6. *Direct, intensive forms of participation are not always appropriate.* It is important to be clear on the purpose and value added of participatory processes that involve poor people, since participation costs to them can be high. Sometimes all that is needed is information from poor people about their priorities and resources and the constraints that guide their decisions, whether these are about which water sources to use or whether to send a child to school. This information can then be used to design policies and programmes that best fit the needs of poor women and men in a particular context.
  7. *Poor people's realities are the starting point.* A mind-set driven by looking at the work through the eyes of poor women and men, and then searching for the best-fit policies for that political, economic, social and institutional context, will prevent many mistakes. This must be complemented by an attitude of learning by doing.
  8. *Local capacity is systematically underestimated.* Local capacity, particularly poor people's capacity to make rational decisions and effectively manage development resources, is usually underestimated. Given the opportunity, poor people often manage resources more efficiently than other agencies, although they may need access to higher technical expertise in some areas. Also frequently underestimated are local research institutes and local government staff. The problem is often lack of incentives or active disincentives, or lack of funds to take initiative, rather than lack of basic competence.
  9. *Poor people's membership-based organizations are overlooked.* In many parts of the world, poor women and men have organized beyond communities into federated networks with representation at the national level. Such networks include producers' associations, farmers' associations, slum dwellers' networks and trade unions. These organizations, as well as other civil society organizations, such as business management institutes and chambers of commerce, are important actors that need to be part of policy dialogue and project implementation where appropriate.
  10. *Changes in rules and institutional processes enable large-scale change.* The poverty reduction challenge is to bring about change on a large scale. This implies replicating successful experiences. This, in turn, requires changes in the enabling policy and regulatory regimes that are informed by successes, failures, poor people's experiences and institutional realities. Changing rules is not enough. Implementing new rules requires educating stakeholders at all levels, including governmental officials, about the new rules and getting buy-in; acknowledging the need for changes in values and behaviours; supporting institutional capacity to implement and manage change processes; ensuring public accountability; monitoring, evaluation and refining the rules based on experience.



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## Comments

This report did not specifically address working and employment conditions. However, the lessons learned apply to any effort to affect widespread change in the informal economy. It supports the need to increased delivery/supply of services, assistance, information, diversity of types of services, and number and type of organizations that actively promote improvements.

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## A.2 Better livelihoods for poor people: The role of agriculture

Department for International Development (DFID), Government of the United Kingdom: *Better livelihoods for poor people: The role of agriculture; Consultation document* (London, May 2002).<sup>10</sup>

### Country

Global. Countries where the Department for International Development is already engaged in agriculture and rural reform processes include Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.

### Background and objective

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the government department in the United Kingdom responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The document proposes that DFID and other development agencies should adopt a new role, one that emphasizes realizing rights through creating opportunities for the poor, especially women. The report states that the crucial challenge is to ensure that agricultural growth takes place, and that small-scale farmers, entrepreneurs and workers with low incomes participate fully in it. A specific challenge is to incorporate the lessons of good practices learned so far at the macro level into mainstream policy and action. This process is likely to include the reform of policies, institutions and laws to improve poor people's access to land, markets and services. It may require revitalization of a whole range of services and reconfiguration of existing public institutions to accommodate a different role for government.

The report emphasizes that there are still questions as to whether, in a market-led environment, the various threads "hang together" sufficiently to deliver maximum benefit in terms of better livelihoods, sustainable development and poverty reduction. The authors maintain that these questions will not be answered by policy research by development agencies or the international community. Development of new ideas can happen only on the ground, supported by regional and international lessons learned. The DFID proposes to work with partners, under the leadership of governments committed to poverty reduction, to tackle the issues raised in the paper.

The report's aim is to stimulate discussion within and outside the DFID. Its purpose is to demonstrate that there is a case for taking specific interest in agriculture. According to the authors, many poverty reduction papers stress the importance of agriculture, but few suggest how to make it perform better. Finally, the report outlines several ways in which agriculture growth can reduce poverty and inequality.

<sup>10</sup> Available at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/agricultureconsult.pdf>.

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## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

Previous approaches to agriculture development have focused on increasing agriculture production with little consideration of markets and consumer demand. Experience has shown, however, that productivity increases and investment in value-adding enterprises takes place only when driven by market forces. Small-scale producers are strongly market oriented. The challenge is to strengthen their capacity to seize new market opportunities for products, such as labour-intensive horticulture and livestock goods, for which they have a particular competitive advantage.

Two recent examples of the application of agricultural research to real world situations are given. The first is in the Chandong Province of China, where increased yields of 30 per cent and increased production valued at US\$ 145 million annually of sweet potato crop was achieved by introducing a new method of propagating virus-free seed roots and vines. The other example was in Africa, where new control strategies for tackling cassava mosaic virus were undertaken. The authors suggest that these examples, along with others, demonstrate that we must give much more attention to strengthening people's services, as well as strategies that strengthen the supply of services.

The report states that a "livelihood study" in the Embu District of Kenya by Thorne and Tanner (2001) found the following:

- Wealthier farmers have relatively specialized enterprises that focus on staple food crops (mainly maize and beans) sold to local markets. These farmers can afford levels of technology, such as fertilizer, that maximize efficiency.
- Most medium-sized farms pursue a traditional strategy of food production for home consumption, with occasional surpluses sold into the market. These farms struggle to compete with the "techno-rich" farms and are increasingly dependent on off-farm sources of income.
- Poorer farmers cannot produce sufficient food for their own consumption. They are forced to take risks by diversifying into unconventional but high-value agricultural products, such as milk, flowers, French beans and snap peas that are sold to middlemen. Most food needs are met through purchases from the local market, using cash obtained from the sale of high-value agricultural produce.

At a macro level, high transportation costs are a particular barrier to trade. For one-third of all African countries, transportation costs account for more than 25 per cent of the total value of exports; for Uganda, they exceed 70 per cent. Other factors that reduce the effectiveness of markets include:

- the relatively high cost of contracting with many small producers;
- the absence of grades and standards;
- poor market information;
- weak contract enforcement.

Arrangements that can overcome some of these barriers include the establishment of:

- commodity exchanges;
- contract farming;
- farmers' organizations/cooperatives;
- quality management schemes, traceability systems and codes of practice;
- local storage facilities to improve stability of food suppliers and overcome boom and bust cycles;

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- capacity of producers to analyze market opportunities for themselves;
  - franchising of monopoly marketing agencies.

Selected recommendations in the report include:

- supporting governments and building capacity to develop a vision for agriculture that goes beyond the “Ministry of Agriculture”;
- building capacity and supporting advocacy of civil society groups and the private sector, including farmers’ organizations, as a means of building a voice in political, institutional and policy reform processes (such as land reform processes);
- engaging with organizations that set policies, rules, standards and norms that shape agricultural opportunities for poor people;
- promoting lesson-learning and developing tools to help policy-makers (donors and governments) carry forward a vision of agricultural development, taking account of the dynamic changes being experienced.

## **Comments**

While not specifically addressing working and employment conditions, the report highlights the importance of the “macro-environment” on promoting development and the reduction of poverty, stating that this is likely to include reform of policies, institutions and laws to improve people’s access to land, markets and services. The report supports the concept that development of new ideas can happen more efficiently with input at the local level, combined with regional and international lessons learned.

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## **A.3 Mission report: Vietnam**

Mr. Tsuyoshi Kawakami, Specialist on Occupational Safety and Health, ILO Subregional Office for East Asia. The report covers missions undertaken to Hanoi (4-7 July 2001), CanTho (13-21 October 2001), Hanoi (4-7 November 2001), and Ho Chi Ming City and CanTho (5-9 December 2001).

### **Country**

Vietnam.

### **Background and objective**

The report summarized a series of missions to develop and pilot-test a new Work Improvement for Neighborhood Development (WIND) training package and to organize a national workshop on occupational safety and health in agriculture in Hanoi, which aimed to disseminate the WIND experiences among different provinces in Vietnam.

According to the report, WIND training has been shown to promote equal participation of women and men in rural communities. Participants in WIND training courses are always pairs of wives and husbands. The ILO has been working with the Government of Vietnam and a number of its research and training institutions and farmers’ organizations for several years to improve the working and living environment for people in rural areas. The work has focused primarily on providing training for members of the Farmers’ Association and for workers in rural cooperatives.

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## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

A new WIND training package was drafted, focusing on the improvement of working conditions. A 42-two item checklist addressing various aspects of the agriculture work was created. Relevant illustrations and texts were developed and tested on 20 households (20 pairs of wives and husbands). According to Kawakami, the newly drafted training package worked well. The follow-up visit confirmed that the farmers who participated in the training were able to start immediate improvement actions, such as labeling hazardous substances, using multi-level racks and using push carts. In most cases, however, the farmers tended to start with simple solutions relating to their living conditions.

In Vietnam, WIND trainings have been conducted through the network of a farmers' association and through rural health centre networks. According to the author, both channels worked well to increase coverage, and various local channels should be tried and mobilized.

The report noted that very few farmers have access to computerized media and there are still obvious needs to develop simple and practical training and promotional materials, such as photo sheets or leaflets.

## **Comments**

The WIND training package has been used successfully to improve working and employment conditions among rural farmers in Vietnam who participated in the courses, and the programme offers equal instruction to women and men. The ILO has been working for several years with the Government of Vietnam, a number of its rural health centre networks, research and training institutions, and farmers' associations. As a result, there is a strong structure, or network, in Vietnam through which to implement future programmes. According to the author, working through different organizations increased coverage, and various local channels should be tried and mobilized for future projects.

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## **A.4 Trade unions in the informal sector**

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah, Deputy Secretary-General, Ghana Trades Union Congress: "Ghana: Organizing informal sector workers requires nurturing dynamic links with the relevant public authorities and institutions, both national and international, that can provide the necessary support", in *Labour Education: Trade unions in the informal sector: Finding their bearings; Nine country papers* (Geneva, ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities), No. 116, 1999/3, pp. 1-14.

### **Country**

Ghana.

### **Background and objective**

The informal sector has received increasing attention in the development discourse of Ghana since the middle of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. It has, in effect, been the target of policy initiatives and activities by certain governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations, including trade unions. The attention to the sector at the intellectual and policy levels has arisen from the realization that the sector has not only persisted from the making of Ghana as a new nation state, but has also been dramatically expanding. The paper describes in detail rural and informal labour, common needs of these workers, recommendations for future trade union action and relevant initiatives.

The following three tables summarize the panorama of informal sector activities in Ghana for the rural informal economy, six distinctive types of rural labour, and activities in the urban informal economy.

**Table A.4-1. Informal sector activities in Ghana for the rural informal economy**

Type of activity	Description
<b>Agricultural</b>	These are predominately farming units dependent on family labour and are made up of a large number of small farmers in the rural and semi-rural areas. The farmers are mostly illiterate or semi-literate and have no formal training. Farming skills are acquired through apprenticeship.
<b>Fishing and fish processing</b>	These are found mostly along Ghana's coastline and are mainly composed of married males aged between 18 and 40 years. These predominately illiterate workers acquired their skills through experience from their early childhood. The value added and processing activities that include smoking and marketing the fish are basically undertaken by women.
<b>Rural agro-based processing</b>	These include processing cassava into <i>gari</i> , cassava dough, of palm kernel, groundnut and copra oils, palm wine tapping, local <i>pito</i> brewery, local gin distillery, and traditional soap-making. These activities are dominated by married female workers, mostly over 30, and predominately illiterate. Their skills are acquired from within the family. Their experience of seasonal underemployment is pronounced. Mostly married, with children, they lack social security protection. There are also the forest product workers, mostly male, namely carpenters, rattan and bamboo craftsman, wood carvers and woodworking machine operators.

**Table A.4-2. Distinctive types of rural labour**

Type of labour	Description
<b>Family labour</b>	A distinctive characteristic of rural informal labour. It permeates all the subsectors within rural agriculture. It is predominant in both food and cash crop farming, and in fishing and agro-processing. From a labour market and economic standpoint, family labour is considered crucial for the survival and viability of the enterprise. It is also used as a kind of apprenticeship for the transfer of skills from one generation to the next.
<b>Casual labour</b>	Known in local parlance as "by-day", it is the next major type of labour in the rural informal sector. It is prevalent in the food and cash crop subsector where it is needed to carry out work including land clearing, preparation of mounds, planting, weeding, fertilizer and chemical application, and harvesting. Casual labour exists under different kinds of contract, and has a high level of mobility. Where casual workers are not migrant, many also have their own farms where they grow crops for subsistence. Payment for casual workers is usually in cash, but can also be in kind.
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	Systems of apprenticeship exist within the fisheries and the agro-processing subsectors, especially in oil palm extraction. Apprentices are normally not paid, but they may receive cash as pocket money or, as in fishing, be provided for in kind, such as fish.
<b>Permanent labour</b>	This constitutes a relatively small proportion of the rural agricultural labour force. The size of the farm and the degree of permanence of the crop type determines to a large extent the permanence of labour. Perennial tree crops like cocoa, oil palm, coconut and rubber produce permanent workers.
<b>Communal labour</b>	This is an arrangement by which farmers within an area bound by common agreement pool their labour together to assist each other in turns.
<b>Child labour</b>	This form of labour is an important component of the rural informal sector workforce. It is an integral part of family labour, especially in the rural setup. Children are also employed by non-relatives. Such children are usually out of school and fully in the labour market.

**Table A.4-3. Activities in the urban informal economy**

Type of activity	Description
<b>Urban food traders and processors</b>	These include food sellers in the market, itinerant wholesalers and retailers, bakers, caterers and cooked-food sellers. These workers are mostly women, predominantly illiterate or semi-literate. They acquire their knowledge and skills largely from family. They are also low-income earners and have no social security protection.
<b>Health and sanitation workers</b>	These include chemical sellers, drug store operators, funeral undertakers, night soil carriers, refuse collectors, tradition and herbal healers, attendants in private maternity homes, and traditional birth attendants.
<b>Domestic workers</b>	Predominantly women.
<b>Repairers</b>	These workers repair watches, refrigeration equipment, radios, mechanical or electrical/electronic equipment. These are mostly young males under 45 who have either received some basic education or are drop-outs, but among who are to be found skilled workers whose skills are largely acquired through years of apprenticeship.
<b>Garages</b>	Auto mechanics, sprayers, welders, vulcanizers, auto electricians, many of whom received some basic formal education alongside many dropouts, and acquired their skills through years of apprenticeship.
<b>Graphic designers</b>	Mostly males between 25 and 50, about two to six workers in each unit who acquire skills through limited vocational training and apprenticeship.
<b>Audiovisual workers</b>	Photographers, cinema/video operators, performers, musicians, film-makers. These are skilled workers, many of whom have received basic formal education, but limited formal vocational training and apprenticeship. They are usually male, but the number of females is increasing.
<b>Hair dressers and barbers, private security men</b>	These are typically aged workers with very low education. They are ill-equipped, lack job security and opportunities for career advancement, and are without any social security protection.
<b>Construction workers</b>	Masons, carpenters, steel benders, small-scale plumbers, house-wiring electricians, and carpenters who are mostly male, aged between 20 and 40 and are mostly school dropouts. Electricians often have some basic training, while all the other groups go through years of apprenticeship.
<b>Manufacturing workers</b>	Predominant activities cover food processing, textile and garments, wood processing and metal works. Women dominate food processing, while men constitute a clear majority in metal works and wood processing. Apprenticeship is the most common form of skill acquisition and employment in urban informal manufacturing units.

### ***Lessons learned and recommendations***

The paper identified common needs that are differential among the various groups of informal sector workers, rural and urban.

- Social needs: job security, health-care facilities and the promotion of occupational safety and health, protective clothing, protection against income losses during sickness, annual leave and maternity rights, minimum wage, general infrastructure and environmental sanitation.
- Economic needs: training and education for skills development, basic tools, business premises, financial credit and marketing opportunities.

Numerous institutions and programmes that relate to the informal sector have been established in Ghana. These include the National Board for Small-Scale Industries, the Fund of Small and Medium Enterprises Development, the Programme of Action for the Mitigation of Social Costs Adjustment, the Ghana Regional Appropriate Technology Industrial Service, TECHNOSERVE and the Council for Indigenous Business Associations, and others. Institutions like the Internal Revenue Service, as well as the Metropolitan and District Assemblies, provide the regulatory framework for the operators of the sector.

The author states that one initiative planned by the Ghana Trades Union Congress is to set up a database on the informal economy which would encompass features, needs, composition and

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geographical profile of the different subsectors. They are also setting up another database on existing institutions and programmes and their profile for assisting the sector.

## **Comments**

The paper provides a thorough description of informal sector work in Ghana, which may be useful to target further programmes in this country. There is also an extensive network of institutions and programmes that relates to the informal sector. It would be useful to follow up with the Ghana Trades Union Congress regarding the status of their proposed databases.

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## **A.4 Togo: Creating partnerships in development initiatives**

World Bank: *Togo: Creating partnerships in development initiatives*, Africa Region Infobriefs No. 48, January 2000.<sup>11</sup> This Infobrief is excerpted from K.R. Eguida: "Togo: Creating partnerships in grassroots development initiatives", in Poverty Reduction and Social Development Unit, Africa Region, World Bank: *A tapestry of hopes: How NGO/civil society field staff in Africa promote participation, inclusion and the social agenda* (Washington, DC, 1999).

### **Country**

Togo.

### **Background and objective**

Supported by a World Bank credit of US\$5 million, the Government of Togo implemented the Grassroots Development Initiatives Project (GDIP) from 1990 to 1998. The project piloted the use of participatory approaches to work directly with NGOs through the Federation of NGOs in Togo. The objective of the project was to improve the living standards and working conditions of the country's poorest communities. The GDIP provided direct assistance to NGOs, who were the key implementation partners, and strengthened their capacity to prepare, implement and manage community-level projects.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The Infobrief outlined several lessons learned.

- Building a relationship between government and NGO is time-consuming, particularly if there is initial reticence to work together, but worthwhile if done well.
- For projects that are critically dependent on a participatory approach involving all stakeholders, beneficiaries, NGOs and government, it is essential to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each set of actors. Beneficiaries and NGOs should be involved in project design, execution and management; government should be involved in providing policy guidance, but not day-to-day management.
- With NGOs as intermediaries in a project, it is important to have eligibility criteria and a pre-selection process to ensure that they have the technical and financial capacity to carry out subprojects.

<sup>11</sup> Available at <http://www.worldbank.org/afri/findings/infobeng/infob48.htm>.

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- Well-designed training programmes for NGOs, as well as associations or groups of beneficiaries, should be a priority.
  - While contribution by beneficiaries to subprojects is critical to ensure ownership and maintenance, the amount should not be set so high as to discourage the poorest beneficiaries.
  - Subproject sustainability, particularly of the infrastructure and equipment, cannot be achieved unless a mechanism is established for operation and maintenance after construction, including the collection of funds.
  - In order to ensure that sponsoring NGOs provide the necessary support to communities, they need to be particularly compensated for the expenses incurred on preparation, execution and operation of subprojects.
  - Income-generating activities should be financed by loans, instead of grants, to encourage financial discipline on the part of beneficiaries. Although the NGO receives the fund as a grant, they establish a revolving fund for on-lending to beneficiaries. Also, the lack of working capital is a problem to be overcome.
  - Among the income-generating activities, the most successful subprojects were small livestock breeding, storage facilities and micro-finance.
  - Subprojects should focus more on women's needs.
  - Illiteracy makes it difficult for beneficiary groups to participate in a range of activities, especially when dealing with the banks and managing funds allocated to them.
  - Subprojects need to consider and factor in the relevant socio-cultural aspects.
  - Subprojects would have a greater developmental impact if they were prepared as part of an inter-related programme on complementary activities.
  - Subprojects should emphasize not only the economic and social aspects, but also capacity building and institutional support for grassroots community organizations.

## **Comments**

This World Bank-supported project targeted living conditions and working conditions of the country's poorest communities. It focused on many issues relevant to MSEs and the informal economy, including those in the macro-environment. The "lessons learned" section provides comprehensive information that should be considered when developing pilot studies under the learning and research agenda.



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## **A.6 International OSH programme in the informal sector**

William D. Salter, Senior Specialist on Conditions of Work, ILO Subregional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific: *International OSH programme on the informal sector* (Manila, ILO, November 1998).<sup>12</sup>

### **Country**

Global, Philippines.

### **Background and objective**

The paper describes activities in the Philippines, although in a global context, related to promoting occupational safety and health in MSEs and the informal economy. Its objective is to propose strategies and give recommendations to further working conditions development, in particular OSH.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

Several national surveys were conducted in the Philippines in the mid-1990s. The author states that, as a result of these surveys, we can begin for the first time to piece together a more comprehensive picture of the problem. But the picture is tantalizingly contradictory. We will certainly have to continue to rely also on the results of small-scale fieldwork, at least to add depth to the information gathered through these large surveys.

Smaller-scale surveys have also provided useful information on the hazards faced by different groups of informal sector workers. A “snapshot study” of working conditions among informal sector operators in construction, automotive/machinery repair and metalwork noted prevalent OSH problems, as did another small survey carried out by the ILO’s Interdepartmental Project on the Urban Informal Sector. In Africa, a pilot survey in Dar es Salaam found similar problems. The common roots of these problems relate to poverty, insecurity of land tenure, poor education, lack of institutional support and weak organization.

Action to improve occupational safety and health in the informal sector can and should be multi-pronged. In view of the lack of interest by informal sector workers, as well as by government and non-governmental organizations in the OSH problems facing informal sector workers, particular attention must be paid to awareness-raising. Efforts are also needed to produce technical guidance that is adapted to the situation, problems and needs of particular groups of informal sector workers. This will in turn promote the effective use of action-oriented programmes, since these will necessarily depend on the informal sector operators and workers themselves being – and feeling – equipped to tackle their own problems. Strategies and solutions that depend heavily on external expertise will not lead to widespread improvement.

Few government institutions in developing countries give priority to providing services and support for the informal sector. As a starting point, therefore, the organizations whose mandates extend to the informal sector need to be encouraged to consider how their work could contribute to the goal of improving occupational safety and health.

In the modern formal sector, employers’ and workers’ organizations have sometimes made important contributions to OSH, especially through education and awareness programmes for their members. These organizations generally do not have members in the informal sector and their efforts are therefore not directed there. The organizations of informal sector operators, on the other hand, have not yet developed to the stage where they have been able to include OSH in their activities. There are, on the other hand, many NGOs working closely with the informal sector,

<sup>12</sup> Available at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/mdtmanila/speeches/osh.htm>.

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mostly assisting in providing business development support. Occupational safety and health has typically not been on their agenda, despite the evident links with the issues with which they are concerned.

The author poses the question: Do we need extensive surveys of the OSH problems of informal sector workers? Certainly there is no need to rely on extensive studies and surveys to conclude that OSH hazards exist. On the other hand, we cannot yet claim to have a clear picture of the problem, not even clear enough to confidently identify who should be the priority target groups. Most importantly, we still need to learn more about the attitudes and concerns of the informal sector workers and operators themselves towards their safety and health at work. Moreover, there is a pressing need to raise public and government awareness of the OSH problems facing informal sector workers, for which the information provided by studies and surveys is invaluable.

Two obstacles to influencing the informal sector are a lack of participants and partners: participants, because the informal sector operators and workers simply are not much interested in occupational safety and health, even when it is presented as the other side of the productivity coin; partners, because the organizations that are willing and able to work with the informal sector are generally not ready, either, to make OSH a major element of their work.

The author concludes that, in view of the size and scope of the informal sector and the very wide range of occupational safety and health problems confronting workers in different activities, approaches to improving OSH must be well targeted to the needs of particular groups of workers. These can include subsector-specific, enterprise-based strategies as well as community-based strategies.

The key is simple, action-oriented programmes that focus on the priorities on informal sector workers. Since OSH is not a priority for informal sector workers, it may therefore paradoxically need to take a back seat in promoting their safety and health. There is therefore a need to involve a wider range of organizations that have not previously been concerned with occupational safety and health.

## **Comments**

The foundation to the substance of this report was instrumental in the creation of the ILO training manual on *Improve Your Work Environment and Business (I-WEB)*, which combined the concepts of WISE and IYB into a package appropriate to MSEs and the informal economy. It also led to the concept of the current ILO learning and research agenda for improving working conditions among MSEs and the informal economy.

A key message from this report is that to have greater impact, scale and sustainability on positive changes to the work environments of informal sector workers, a broad approach to the issues involved needs to be taken. This includes involving organizations, from the international to the local levels, that are in a variety of disciplines but, yet, still focus on improving some aspects of the informal economy.

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## **A.7 Occupational safety and health for the urban informal sector**

Save the Children: *Occupational safety and health for the urban informal sector: The Save the Children experience*, Volume 1 (1996).

### **Country**

Philippines.

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## **Background and objective**

There is increasing recognition of the potential roles of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), grassroots self-help organizations and government agencies in improving working conditions in the informal sector. Current approaches of NGOs and other agencies assisting the informal sector operators focus on increasing profits through credit and other business services. Working conditions issues have not yet gained much attention.

During 1995, the Save the Children Federation conducted an action research programme in the Philippines, under the ILO interdepartmental project focused on improving working conditions for informal sector workers. The programme built on two existing mechanisms for reaching the informal sector: community volunteer health workers (CVHWs) and a trade association of informal sector workers called Partners for Subsector Development (PSD). The CVHW programme provides basic outreach and health services to low-income communities nationwide and is implemented by the Philippines Department of Health. There are 270,000 trained CVHWs throughout the Philippines who are supervised by the local government Rural Health Midwives in each community. The PSD is a trade association of micro-entrepreneurs who make industrial cleaning rags, floor mats and other products from fabric remnants or *retaso*. There are approximately 50,000 women, mainly concentrated in and around Metro Manila, who work in their homes.

The project tested the effectiveness and the potential integration of these two existing institutions for the delivery of community-based occupational safety and health (OSH) services. Save the Children designed a generalized curriculum in OSH for community volunteer health workers and an additional module that addressed the specific issues of home-based *retaso* workers. CVHWs from communities with concentrations of *retaso* workers went through both the generalized training and the specific module. Representatives of the PSD also attended the training to promote cooperation between these two organizations.

The general objective of the project was to enable CVHWs to make sustainable improvements in the OSH of workers in the informal sector. Specific objectives included the following:

- to design a widely applicable training module in urban sector occupational safety and health and a submodule specifically for the *retaso* industry;
- to test the training module in five selected communities;
- to ensure the integration of OSH into the routine roles of the CVHWs in the five pilot communities;
- to facilitate a partnership between PSD and CVHWs in improving the working conditions of *retaso* workers;
- to take initial steps to integrate OSH into the national CVHW training curriculum of the Department of Health.

The study focused on the existing health work conditions among informal sector workers, particularly women. It included surveys and interviews of the target subjects, followed by an on-site (home or workplace) evaluation of working conditions and a medical investigation. The study included both subjective (surveys and interviews) and objective (work-site and medical evaluations) methods.

## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The following key lessons were learned from this project.

- Informal sector operators have developed their own ways to improve their productivity and working conditions. One of the best methods for developing simple solutions to common OSH problems in a specific industry is to conduct case studies of workers from different areas to identify best practices in the industry. These practices can be combined during a workshop with members of a trade association and institutionalized through the association to improve conditions for more workers in the given industry.

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- Involving CVHWs in the research increased their knowledge of the informal sector activities prevalent in their communities and their enthusiasm for the training. Because a simple survey was used, it is easily replicable in other communities and can both add to the database on the informal sector and increase the awareness of CVHWs about their own communities.
  - As a socio-cultural norm, Filipinos accept pain as an integral part of work. If training and awareness building is to be effective, it should include activities to change this attitude.
  - Gender awareness is an important component of training on working conditions in the informal sector.
  - A participatory research and training methodology is essential to enable CVHWs to contextualize problems and apply lessons to actual settings.
  - An existing level of organization among workers is a prerequisite to effectively addressing the working condition issues of informal sector operators. It would not be effective to address these issues in a specific industry before there is some level of organization among the workers and, preferably, an institution that can provide long-term representation and support.
  - Currently there is a low level of awareness about working conditions in the informal sector by national and local government organizations and the health profession. To enable government agencies and health professionals to understand and help address the problems of informal sector workers, more needs to be done to increase their awareness and change their orientation from curative to preventive.
  - Because one of the most effective ways to improve working conditions in the informal sector is for workers themselves to make changes, mechanisms should emphasize education and promotion. Community-based approaches are more effective than clinic-based approaches.
  - Members of the informal sector will endure almost any conditions to earn income. Mechanisms to address OSH must work within this reality and focus on enhancing income earning opportunities and working conditions in tandem.
  - The working and living conditions in the urban informal sector are inseparable. The only way to make lasting improvements is to improve infrastructure and basic services in urban poor areas.

Further recommendations include promoting dialogue among NGOs, the Department of Health and Local Government Units (LGUs) to develop integrated support of the CVHWs. Dialogue between CVHWs and LGUs is particularly important in addressing the environmental causes of poor working conditions. Participatory research and training modules that are industry specific provide an important complement to the work of the CVHWs. Future research should focus on developing ways to improve productivity and working conditions in tandem. Site visits and case studies by a specialist are a vital part of research on an informal sector industry. Training for trade associations should be simple enough so that persons with no health background can understand. It should focus on demonstrating the link between working conditions and productivity.

Because of the cost of research, it would be helpful for the government to designate priority informal sector industries for study based on a large and growing number of workers and growing market demand. The NGOs that work with informal sector associations can coordinate research by facilitating cooperation between researchers and trade associations. With the input of the trade associations, NGOs can design and conduct the industry-specific training modules. NGOs can also be instrumental in helping informal sector associations to institutionalize support for improving working conditions and self-regulation in informal sector industries.

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## Comments

The Save the Children report outlined a research methodology to assess the impact of programmes focused on the informal sector, primarily home-based workers. It also highlighted the value of working with existing intermediate organizations to reach the target audience. The report stressed that NGOs who work with informal sector associations can coordinate research by facilitating cooperation between researchers and trade associations to appropriately design and conduct industry-specific training modules.

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## A.8 Encouraging small businesses to adopt effective technologies to prevent exposure to health issues

L.C. Leviton and J.W. Sheehy: “Encouraging small businesses to adopt effective technologies to prevent exposure to health hazards”, in *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, Vol. 29, No. 4, April 1996, pp. 409-411.

### Country

Global, United States.

### Background and objective

Leviton and Sheehy state that, because small businesses are heterogeneous, the prospects are low for direct inspection and enforcement by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). As a result, the prospect for adequate regulation of worker health problems in small businesses is also unlikely. To address this problem, alternative mechanisms, such as voluntary adoption of cost-effective technology, become exceedingly important to study. Radiator repair shops were used to exemplify issues to consider when attempting to influence worker health and safety in small businesses. These shops usually employ very few workers or are run by self-employed persons, and sometimes operate in the informal economy, particularly in developing countries.

Radiator repair shops are notorious for exposing workers [and families] to hazardous levels of lead, both in the United States and worldwide. According to the authors, at least three control technologies are available to reduce lead exposures in radiator repair shops. Each typically costs less than US\$1,000 to install. The article discussed what behavioural science theory says about the best approaches to encourage small enterprises, through the example of radiator repair shops, to install and maintain protective equipment.

### Lessons learned and recommendations

Leviton and Sheehy suggest that two behavioural theories are relevant to the situation. The first is the Transtheoretical Model by Prochaska et al.<sup>13</sup> Although this model is most appropriate to individual-level behaviour change, the ways in which the theory categorizes readiness for change fit the four categories into which radiator repair shops may be placed: (1) workers and owners who do not yet understand the importance of hygiene in the workplace; (2) workers and owners who do understand the lead exposure problem, but are not yet planning to do anything to abate the problem; (3) workers and owners who are aware and planning to do something by studying available technologies; and (4) owners who have already installed the technology (very few to date in the

<sup>13</sup> J.O. Prochaska, C.C. Di Clemente and J.C. Norcross: “In search of how people change: Applications to addictive behaviors”, in *American Psychologist*, Vol. 47, 1992, pp. 1102-1114.

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United States). The theory tailors the behaviour change message to the stage of readiness to change; for example, shops that are unaware of the hazards require a different message than shops that are aware and are choosing among the available technologies.

The second relevant theory is the Diffusion of Innovations<sup>14</sup> and the related field of social marketing.<sup>15</sup> In diffusion theory, innovations are adopted in identifiable “waves”, first by a few advanced thinkers, then by a group of “early adopters”, and finally by late adopters. People observe, discuss and appraise the benefits and costs of the innovation over time. Social marketing can speed the adoption process by recruiting relevant social networks and influential sources to assist in the appraisal process.

The authors report that relevant sources of information and influence for radiator repair shop owners include the following:

- trade associations, which are a credible source of information about trend affecting the industry;
- the suppliers of lead. For some shops, the supplier’s sales representative may be the most consistent and personal contact available to make owners and workers aware of potential health and safety hazards and of the availability of low-cost technology to reduce exposures;
- the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration through consultative programmes and production of outreach materials;
- occupational health clinics, which can multiply the effects because they are in contact with affected owners and workers. Clinics can publicize their findings through the cooperation of trade associations and, perhaps, the suppliers of lead.

The authors propose that interventions aimed at motivating radiator repair shop owners and workers to improve working conditions may offer a model with some common elements that could be adopted in the broader study of improving working conditions for other very small enterprises.

## Comments

Radiator repair shops are typically small operations and are often operated by self-employed persons. These workers are also routinely exposed to lead, one of the oldest recognized occupational poisons. The report highlights relevant learning theory in the context of these workers, but the application of such theories could apply to any group of MSEs.

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<sup>14</sup> E.M. Rogers: *Diffusion of innovations*, Third edition (New York, Free Press, 1983).

<sup>15</sup> P. Kotler and E.L. Roberto *Social marketing: Strategies for changing public behavior* (New York, Free Press, 1989).

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## **A.9 Report of the National Seminar on Safety and Health for Home-based Workers in Thailand**

Seminar organized by the Office of Home Workers of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) and the ILO, Bangkok, 23-24 April 2001. Other cooperating agencies were the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare of the MOLSW, the Ministry of Public Health, HomeNet Thailand and the National Institute for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (NICE).<sup>16</sup>

### **Country**

Thailand.

### **Background and objective**

The seminar described in the report formed part of the ongoing cooperation between the government, homeworkers' organizations in Thailand and the ILO to improve labour protection for large, but difficult-to-reach, groups of workers. The purpose of the seminar was to contribute to improved safety and health for home-based workers in Thailand through policy development and coordinated action by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The Office of Home Workers (OHW) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW) was the national seminar organizer in cooperation with the ILO. The other cooperating agencies were the Department of Labour Protection and Welfare of the MOLSW, the Ministry of Public Health, HomeNet Thailand and the National Institute for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (NICE).

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The seminar report stated that it is important to gradually protect home-based workers by taking a step-by-step approach. Large employers and their subcontractors should be involved in the protection schemes for homeworkers, thus demonstrating social responsibility of businesses in labour protection. It is also important to increase homeworkers' bargaining power to enable them to negotiate with their employers and contractors. The government should also retrain their labour inspectors to deal better with homeworkers' issues. Concerted efforts of relevant organizations and trained human resources at local levels are essential for success, because knowledge of local conditions is crucial. Home-based workers need to work together as consolidated home-based workers' groups in order to create better working conditions.

One suggestion from the seminar was that the government and homeworkers should establish a crafts centre in Bangkok for sharing traditional and new wisdom and attracting tourists to buy local products. This could also help promote entrepreneurship development.

The Ministry of Public Health unfolded plans to conduct home visits when OSH risks are identified at local clinics. Initial priority target groups will include pregnant women and children.

Several good examples of improved working conditions in Thailand were given at the conference, but not well elaborated upon in the document. Examples included the increased social dialogue and exchange of knowledge between workers and contractors in the textile industry, cooperation between workers and contractors in Viang Papao district, improving health insurance in Chiang Mai, use of natural fertilizers in vegetable farming and natural substances in textile dyeing, and improving working and living conditions after a WISE training course in a bronze cooperative in Bangkok.

<sup>16</sup> The text of the report to this national seminar is available at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/asiaosh/country/thailand/hmworker/index.htm>.

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While not directly related to homeworkers, the report mentioned that employers' organizations can deliver WISE training courses as a service to their members. They can apply "marketing principles" to sustain WISE training. For example, an employers' organization in Laos offers fee-based WISE training to its members. It collects about US\$ 7.00 from each participant to cover the costs of running WISE training. As a result, according to the report, the employers' organization in Laos can conduct WISE training courses in a sustainable manner without financial assistance from other sources.

While WISE in Laos is still going on, the marketing mechanisms of WISE (selling WISE with fees) in Laos have stopped after the conference paper was written. The reason was that some employer organizations complained that only the ILO WISE programme collected fees for training, while other UN organizations and international collaboration agencies provided their training free of charge.<sup>17</sup>

## **Comments**

A unique aspect of Thailand's approach to improving working and employment conditions in MSEs and the informal economy is that the government has created an Office of Home Workers in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The proceedings also emphasized that large employers and their subcontractors have a social responsibility to disseminate information on good working conditions down the chain of production. In addition, the report states that home-based workers need to work together and not individually. Consolidating home-based workers' groups was essential to create better working conditions. This theme is reiterated by several of the other documents reviewed.

It is not known if the Ministry of Public Health is currently implementing the plan to conduct home visits when OSH risks are identified at local clinics, but it makes sense that doing so could reach a large number of the most at-risk workers and help develop capacity of local clinics to promote better working and employment conditions in general.

The example given of WISE training in Laos is intriguing. Clearly, establishing a training programme that pays for itself is a complicated process, but future interventions than intend to reach a large audience and become sustainable should not treat this issue lightly.

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## **A.10 Extending maternity protection to women in the informal economy**

Social Security Policy and Development Branch and Conditions of Work and Employment Programme: *Extending maternity protection to women in the informal economy: An overview of community-based health-financing schemes*, Working Paper (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

### **Country**

Global.

### **Background and objective**

Health financing schemes from various countries in Asia, Africa and South America that offered maternity care and/or cash benefits were surveyed. Altogether, information on 28 schemes

<sup>17</sup> Personal communication with T. Kawakami, ILO Subregional Office for Asia and the Pacific.



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was collected during the research, 23 provided meaningful information for the report. Of these 23 schemes, 13 are operating in Africa, nine in Asia and one in Latin America.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The authors report that only one out of the 23 schemes mentioned explicitly that there was no demand for maternity care coverage. The rest either reported that there was a strong demand for maternity care,<sup>18</sup> or the comprehensiveness of the maternity care package they offered reflected the importance of these services.<sup>19</sup> Some schemes have been designed with the specific purpose of providing maternal and child health care.<sup>20</sup> These preliminary indications suggest that, in general, there is a strong demand from local women served by these community-based health-financing schemes for maternity care.

As the research drew to a close, general information was received regarding 55 cooperatives offering health-care services to their members. At the same time, the SHINE Project in the Philippines offered an extensive up-to-date database on 35 schemes. SAMANATA in Nepal, a federation with around 75 organizations under its umbrella, also confirmed the existence of at least two organizations offering maternity benefits associated with regular savings, and benefits covering transportation costs incurred when seeking maternity care. Further work researching this domain would allow more insights into the key elements that lead a health micro-insurance scheme to long-term sustainability and success. It could also help in creating linkages between the public systems and the various non-governmental, community-based mechanisms in order to better promote and extend maternity protection to women engaged in atypical forms of work.

According to the authors, schemes in the sample that have been in existence for a relatively long time may embody a number of strengths that are worth further research. It will be useful to find out how some of them have managed to overcome financial difficulties, such as cash flow and budget balance, despite the fact that they seldom apply actuarial calculation to determine the level of premium rates and benefit payments. In addition, what could be the mechanisms that have allowed them to balance their finances, in spite of the presence of various possible factors that could lead them to irregular and/or insufficient premium revenue and/or excessive benefits expenditure?

Obstacles that needed to be addressed by the long-lasting schemes include a lack of qualified management staff with accounting capacity or a lack of proper office equipment, large fluctuations in members' monthly income and membership number, delay in payments, etc. The absence of an effective verification procedure on the status of a health-care service user, excessive usage of health-care services and lack of a mechanism, such as a waiting period to minimize adverse selection, are additional obstacles.

African schemes reviewed in the report that have a maternity care component tended to have fewer beneficiaries compared to Asian schemes. Six out of ten African schemes have 1,000 or less women beneficiaries, while six out of eight Asian schemes have more than 1,000 women beneficiaries. The African schemes also tended to be younger than the Asian schemes.

Some of the good practices implemented by selected community-based health financing schemes that may ensure long-term financial sustainability include the following:

<sup>18</sup> Ishaka, Kitovu and Kiwoko hospitals (Uganda), and Gonoshasthaya Kendra (Bangladesh).

<sup>19</sup> La mutuelle de santé communautaire Oumou Dilly and Mutuelle des Travailleurs de l'Education et de la Culture (MUTEC), Mali; Rural Health Programme of Grameen Kalyan, Bangladesh; the Bustos LGU-PhilHealth Project and the ORT Health Plan Scheme, Philippines; etc.

<sup>20</sup> The Safe Motherhood Fund, Tanzania (May 2001), and Mother Child Rescue Project, Uganda (mid-2000).

- Preventive and maternity care training, as well as awareness-raising on reproductive health care – provided by local women health workers in the communities – were proven to be important in encouraging women to join a health micro-insurance scheme. Awareness-raising activities naturally need to be carried out at a place and time convenient to the women’s place of work and working schedule.
- Incorporating family planning programmes into the maternity benefits offered by the schemes.
- Incorporating complementary work, such as disease prevention and general health education for the target groups – found to be both cost-effective and to reduce the general health risk of insured members and/or target groups. Extra savings gained from a general reduction of health risk would allow more scope for maternity coverage.

## **Comments**

Health micro-insurance schemes that offer maternity care and/or cash benefits may be ideal groups through which other aspects of working and employment conditions can be promoted, particularly for industries or occupations with high prevalence of chemical exposures or physical stress, which may adversely affect the pregnant mothers and their unborn children.

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## **A.11 Impact of Start your Business (SYB) training on women enterprises in Vietnam**

S.D. Barwa: *Impact of Start your Business (SYB) training on women enterprises in Vietnam*, Working Paper Series No. 1 (Hanoi, ILO, 2003).

### **Country**

Vietnam.

### **Background and objective**

The ILO Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training programme has been running in Vietnam since 1998 in collaboration with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI). The objectives of the SIYB programme in Vietnam are:

- to develop and introduce a national long-term training resource and skills development capability and reflect the needs and capabilities of small-scale private enterprises;
- to develop and adapt practical resource materials that build on best practices available in the country and draw on lessons learned from small enterprise development internationally;
- to strengthen the institutional capacity of partner organizations (POs) that have a proven track record in business training and that will be entrusted with conducting the Start Your Business (SYB) and the Improve Your Business (IYB) training programmes.

From February to June 2000, Oxfam-Quebec conducted SYB training workshops for women in the provinces of Hanoi, Quang Ninh and Hai Duong. In October 2000, the SIYB Project and Oxfam-Quebec (Hanoi) initiated a comprehensive survey to assess the impact of SYB training on the women participants. The survey provided much information on the impact and relevance of the specific modules (marketing, setting prices, cash flow, etc.) on the business performance in these women-owned businesses.

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In July and August 2001, follow-up interviews were conducted with 20 women entrepreneurs to explore some of the topics covered during the initial survey. Half of the women had participated in SYB training, and half had not. The author combines the information collected from the initial survey, the follow-up interviews, and additional primary and secondary sources to assess the impact of the SYB programme on women from rural provinces. The report underscores the positive contributions of the training and identifies some specific recommendations to further improve the impact of the SYB programme on women entrepreneurs in Vietnam.

## ***Lessons learned and recommendations***

The findings of this report demonstrate that SYB training in Vietnam had a positive impact on women in rural areas at two levels:

- business – by increasing business sales and income, employment and other aspects of women’s businesses;
- social – by increasing women’s confidence and decision-making abilities.

Women who participated in SYB training reported increases in sales, income and money for private spending. Nearly 97 per cent of the participants stated that their business performance had improved considerably, and nearly 49 per cent confirmed that their personal income for private spending had increased. After participating in the training, 56 business owners hired new employees, creating a total of 185 new jobs (within the sample).

The SYB training offered women an opportunity to network with other women and to build their confidence. Nearly 90 per cent confirmed that they were more confident in conducting their businesses than before the training, 80 per cent felt more confident in managing their finances, and 76 per cent claimed that they felt more independent in making decisions. After the training, 74 per cent of the participants maintained regular contact with their co-participants by exchanging information on an informal basis.

The report offered the following recommendations:

### **Technical**

- Adapt the SYB training schedule to be more responsive to the specific needs of women participants in situations where they might not be able to participate in a full five-day workshop. SYB training could be extended over a longer and thus less intensive period of time.
- Adapt the content of the SYB training programme with specifically designed gender-sensitive components and ensure after-training support with specific follow-up courses with additional topics on marketing and finances.
- Continue to support networking by assisting women in formalizing business associations and business clubs.

### **Methodological**

- Carry out additional targeted impact surveys.
- Increase the sample size of women without businesses.
- Use random sampling and control groups in future impact studies.

While women entrepreneurs are not a homogenous category – there are many subgroups depending on sector, business size, location, desires, ambitions, etc. – common characteristics of personal development, such as education, access to resources and other relevant matters, are intricately related to the dynamic process of entrepreneurship development, particularly in the context of gender.

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## Comments

This document further emphasized the extensive network of organizations actively involved with the informal sector in Vietnam – in this case, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce (VCCI) and partner organizations with experience in this country. The report outlines a research methodology to assess the impact of interventions and gives recommendations to improve training programmes to reach a wider audience.

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## A.12 Organizing informal workers in the global economy

Harvard Trade Union Program: *Organizing informal workers in the global economy: Unions, co-operatives, advocacy networks, and emerging labor organizations* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University, October 2001).<sup>21</sup>

### Country

Global.

### Background and objective

On 22-23 October 2001, Harvard University hosted a workshop with the goal of exploring the various unions, cooperatives and advocacy networks that concentrate their efforts on the informal economy. The conference organizers state that, over a decade ago, scholars argued that most organizations of informal workers crumbled rapidly, after perhaps two or three years of activity. There is today a growing recognition that the organization of informal workers may be a more permanent feature of the contemporary economic landscape.

### Lessons learned and recommendations

The oldest trade union of women in the informal sector comes from India and represents perhaps 250,000 members. Founded in 1972, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has inspired several emulators abroad, including the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) of South Africa. The International Labour Organization collaborates extensively with SEWA in developing programmes and forms of inquiry into the informal economy. Meanwhile, UNITE in North America and the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union (TCFUA) of Australia have taken up the cause of home-based workers. There are a variety of cooperatives and advocacy networks in many nations that have allowed informal workers a modicum of voice and visibility. The international alliances of home-based workers and street vendors (called, respectively, HomeNet and StreetNet), as well as the global network WIEGO, are the most recent manifestations.

### Comments

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is sustainable and has inspired other programmes. It would be useful to conduct an in-depth study of SEWA and similar associations to characterize factors most associated with success. It may also be useful to involve UNITE, TCFUA and HomeNet in future large-scale projects focused on homeworkers.

<sup>21</sup> Available at <http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/lwp/FordReports/Informal.Econ.II.2001.pdf>.

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The goal of the workshop, to examine a variety of organizations that concentrate their efforts on the informal economy, may be worth replicating at the national or local level.

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### **A.13 An information revolution for small enterprise in Africa**

M. McVay: *An information revolution for small enterprise in Africa: Experience in interactive radio formats in Africa*, SEED Working Paper No. 27, Series on Innovation and Sustainability in Business Support Services (Geneva, ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development, 2002).

#### **Country**

Uganda and Ghana.

#### **Background and objective**

This paper describes a radio programme developed for small enterprises (SE) in Uganda that promotes growth among SEs.<sup>22</sup> Behind the programme is a business relationship between FIT Uganda, a registered commercial small enterprise development organization, and the Central Broadcast Services (CBS), a commercially driven radio station broadcasting in and around Kampala.

Based on marketing and consumer-focused surveys, it was confirmed that:

- radio is by far the most common communication media in Uganda;
- the preferred listening time of small enterprises was 9:30 p.m., following the news;
- 70 per cent of the SEs interviewed were willing to participate in a radio show;
- 40 per cent of the SEs expressed an interest to advertise.

The SEs stated that they wanted programmes of substance and wanted the presentation to talk with them, not at them.

CBS launched a radio programme called *Nekolera Gyange* (I run my own business) in 1999 with commercial sponsors and advertisers. The programme is broadcast twice a week during prime time just after the evening news. The initial demonstration programme cost US\$ 39,000 to produce. After this initial investment, the programme was self-sustaining and one of CBS's most popular shows.

As of May 2001, three additional radio stations were broadcasting small enterprise radio programmes similar to *Nekolera Gyange*. Two are rural stations in Uganda and the other serves the Kumasi region in central Ghana, a concentrated area of small enterprises. According to the author of the paper, the vision is to take advantage of recently liberated airways in a number of African countries to support economic and democratic development by creating a network of radio programmes reaching more than one million SEs across Africa.

<sup>22</sup> The definition of SEs given in the paper includes MSEs and the informal economy.

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Ghana was selected as one of the initial test countries because, like Uganda, it is an emerging democracy with a thriving small business sector whose airways had recently been liberalized. Its programme, called *M'adwumayi* (My business), places more emphasis on working conditions issues than does *Nekolera Gyange*. The programme has been identified with the effort to improve working conditions since its seminal first programme about the fire in the Kumasi Market that occurred close to the time of initiation. It took a leadership role in facilitating a dialogue about fire prevention and safety. Since then, the programme has regularly featured brief “job quality” segments. In the first show, the presenter explained that the job quality section would focus on the physical environment and working conditions of small enterprises, and he elaborated on the link between a safe and healthy work environment and a competitive and growing business. Since then, the programme has covered such topics as:

- safety for people working in restaurants and kitchens;
- prevention of chemical burns and chemical poisoning when handling paint, fertilizers, pesticides, glues and other hazardous chemical substances;
- safety tips for mechanics.

FIT Ghana did not suggest coverage of job quality issues. Rather, the issues surfaced during discussions with SEs as a central issue they wanted to discuss. FIT Ghana conducted a random listener survey and estimated that 38 per cent of the listeners in the Kumasi area tuned into *M'adwumayi*. This represents an audience of about 200,000 businesses.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The ILO FIT programme is developing a strategy for more systematic and sustainable replication around Africa. ILO FIT has approached a private radio production firm whose main business is radio networking and building capacity of African radio stations. ILO FIT envisions working with this firm to network the existing radio programmes and develop a franchise model to offer SE radio to other stations.

### **Comments**

One of the lessons learned in the paper was that development organizations engaged in promoting SE radio should not attempt to influence content. This leads to the question: Will purely SE-driven radio programmes routinely include aspects of working conditions? The Uganda programmes do not directly cover working conditions issues, but the Ghana programme does. Why did this difference emerge? The author points out some differences between the Uganda and Ghana programmes, particularly that the Ghana programme is more focused on a call-in format, and is less studio-produced before segments are aired. It also only had one sponsor at the time the paper was published and was not yet profitable.

If SE radio programmes are utilized to promote better working conditions, some effort may be needed by donor organizations to create the environment where working condition issues are requested by listeners. It is unknown to the extent that this type of intervention would alter the balance of these highly successful radio programmes.

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## A.14 Active learning, early child development and interactive radio instruction

A. Bosch and C. Crespo: *Jugando en el pidi: Active learning, early childhood development and interactive radio instruction: Supporting caregivers, parents and young children*, LearnTech Case Study Series No. 4 (Washington, DC, USAID, 1995).

### Country

Bolivia.

### Background and objective

In the early 1990s, the Government of Bolivia and ONAMFA (National Organization for Children, Women and the Family) created a network of integrated child development sites in peri-urban areas called *pidis* with funds from a World Bank loan. Through linkages with other health and education networks, these home-based programmes provided food with health care and the attention of two community caregivers to children under the age of 6. While the *pidi* system created a safe and healthful environment where parents could leave their young children during the day, the teachers in the centres were typically not trained in child care, particularly in how to engage children in educational activities.

In March 1993, ONAMFA and the USAID-funded LearnTech project agreed to experiment with ways to engage young children in active play, and to train caregivers and stimulate early learning activities through interactive radio instruction (IRI) methodology. The following year, an IRI model was created in Bolivia which catered to the specific educational needs of women caregivers with poor literacy skills and minimal training and young children in the poor peri-urban areas served by ONAMFA. The resulting audio series targeted both young children and caregivers.

Chosen by ONAMFA criteria, each child who enters a *pidi* is either undernourished or at a high level of nutritional risk, from a home with working parents with nobody to care for them. The parents are typically carpenters, construction workers, informal workers or maids. Before the *pidis* were opened, if they wanted to work, some parents were forced to leave their children unattended. Others took their children into the streets of La Paz to sell candies or commodities. The *pidis* address the need for economic viability and child care in the following way:

- Urban-marginalized women work as caregivers of children within their own community. They earn money and learn micro-enterprise management skills.
- Working parents of children attending the *pidis* are assured that their children are well taken care of while they work.

### Lessons learned and recommendations

The *pidi* IRI model for early child development in Bolivia was highly successful and has been replicated in several countries in the Americas and Africa. Formative evaluation was critical to developing the programmes. According to the authors, the programmes are effective tools because they were tested and retested several times. Forty caregivers and 285 children used them for six months. Feedback was solicited from caregivers, parents, regional ONAMFA teams, the national ONAMFA team and external evaluators. Within the design team, “we brainstormed, we assessed, we complained and we negotiated. When we had to, we threw away our adult ideas of what interests children and went back to the *pidis* to observe”. The programmes, originally produced in Spanish, were later translated into the two main indigenous languages in Bolivia, and coverage was greatly increased.

### Comments

In MSEs and the informal economy, particularly in rural areas, parents may be forced to take children to work if they do not have a safe place to leave them. This situation potentially exposes children to occupational safety and health hazards and other negative aspects of working and

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employment conditions. It may also contribute to the perpetuation of child labour, an issue that cuts across all aspects of MSEs and the informal economy. Programmes such as *pidis* that support a safe environment and sound educational activities for children of workers may be an important component of an integrated multidisciplinary approach to improving working conditions in MSEs and the informal economy, particularly as it relates to work-family issues.

The authors' strong recommendation of formative evaluations as a key to success likely extends beyond programmes related to early child development and interactive radio instruction. Future programmes with working and employment conditions components may benefit from re-evaluating themselves in midstream and "throwing away" external ideas about what interests operators and workers in MSEs and the informal economy.

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## **A.15 A pilot survey on occupational safety and health in the informal sector**

Kukindo and Estrella-Gust: *A pilot survey on occupational safety and health in the informal sector, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*, Report 7/94 (Geneva, ILO, 1994).

### **Country**

United Republic of Tanzania.

### **Background and objective**

The paper reports on a survey completed in 1993 on the occupational safety and health issues in the informal sector in the United Republic of Tanzania. Dar es Salaam was selected as the site for the survey because of the high concentration of informal sector activities. The objective was to establish baseline data on occupational safety and health issues and problems in the informal sector, and to test the survey methodology.

In Dar es Salaam, informal sector worksites are widely dispersed, but many of them are clustered in certain quarters. Some operators own their worksites but many rent premises. Others, such as food vendors, tinsmiths, car and bicycle repair workers operate their businesses in open air worksites. It is common to see groups of artisans squatting in vacant land.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The survey provided baseline data on OSH status of certain typical worksites in Dar es Salaam. The findings of the pilot survey can be summarized as follows.

- Most of the operators and workers in the informal sector studied were primary school leavers. Only a few had completed secondary education.
- The majority had acquired their trade skills on the job with very few having attended vocational training schools.
- Awareness of the various OSH problems was lacking.
- The gap in knowledge and information has resulted in the lack of initiatives of operators and workers to take preventative measures or to make conscious efforts in safety and health matters.



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- Workers in the informal sector are exposed to a multiplicity of difficulties in their working environment. The absence of appropriate policies and protective measures compound their vulnerability to hazards.

One of the main recommendations from the pilot study was that, to ensure sustainability of programmes, the main focus should be put in developing the capacity of local NGOs, factory inspection and primary health-care services for taking responsibility for the OSH activities in the informal sector.

### **Comments**

This report reiterates the importance of working with local NGOs and health-care services. Increasing the capacity among the factory inspectorate has many positives, but has little potential to reach the vast number of workplaces in MSEs and the informal economy. Most would never be “inspected” by a labour inspector.

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## **A.16 Local economic and social development**

S. White: *Integrated response 2: Local economic and social development (LESD): Synthesis report* (Geneva, ILO, March 2004).

### **Country**

Philippines.

### **Background and objective**

The author conducted a two-week mission to the Philippines (Manila and Iloilo Province) from 17 to 28 February 2003. A range of consultations were taken with government and non-government to provide information to potential stakeholders regarding the ILO Decent Work and the Integrated Response project, with specific attention to the Local Economic and Social Development (LESD) component. Another purpose of the mission was to solicit information, participation and support from key agencies for the activities of the LESD and its outcomes.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

According to the author, the outcomes of the consultations can be summarized by the following points.

- All agencies confirmed the value and importance of the LESD project, claiming that there was indeed a need for resources that aid development planners and practitioners in their work.
- The Decent Work agenda of the ILO was recognized and supported, although efforts should be made to apply this in the context of poverty reduction and local development in the Philippines. Some people had trouble appreciating the relevance of Decent Work to their development fields, asking for more concrete examples of how Decent Work can be applied. Others believed Decent Work to be a re-package of well-known concepts, but indicated that this could positively contribute to the work of development practitioners and planners once it was presented in a more applied and practical manner.
- All groups consulted supported the view that the LESD project should focus primarily on development challenges at the local level because this is where the greatest challenges for development are faced. Decentralization and the devolution of central

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government programming, planning and reporting responsibilities to municipalities highlight the need for resources and support at the local level, where the potential for integration of social and economic development themes is the greatest.

- The Philippine system of planning from national to regional to provincial to local is a complex arrangement involving a variety of government agencies at all levels. The LESD project should endeavour to strengthen and aid this system with tools and resources that apply the Decent Work agenda, rather than propose changes. However, there is clearly no need for yet another planning guide. There are many planning guides and frameworks in use in the Philippines.

The main contribution the LESD project can make to local development and planning activities appears to be in the provision of the following:

- **tools of assessment:** ways to assess a local area and identify local Decent Work deficits within the context of local economic and social development. This could be based on local development opportunities as well as needs;
- **frameworks and approaches to the design of local development strategies:** having identified local needs and opportunities, development practitioners and planners are required to design a response. The LESD project would offer suggestions as to how this is done;
- **implementation guidelines:** practical advice on how to implement a local development strategy or programme;
- **mechanisms and procedures for reporting:** using monitoring and evaluation techniques, local development practitioners and planners need to know how to assess the success of their efforts and to report back to the local community as well as to external stakeholders.

The author recommended that the LESD project prepare a written resource manual that applies the four dimensions of Decent Work for use by local-area development practitioners and planners in the Philippines. He also suggested national and regional forums to review and comment on the manual and its use.

## **Comments**

Working conditions is a component of Decent Work and related to LESD. The observations and recommendations made by the mission would be relevant to applying the Learning and Research Agenda in the Philippines, and possibly other countries.

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## **A.17 Social protection plus for Africa**

C. Moghalu: *Social protection plus for Africa* (Geneva, ILO, July 2002).

### **Country**

Africa.

### **Background and objective**

The author provides an overview of the coverage and effectiveness of social protection in Africa, and provides recommendations for future action.

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## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

According to the author, the basic needs of individuals are the same everywhere, but the means of satisfying these needs are not. The African experience has shown that, rather than create new organizations for tackling socio-economic insecurity, greater emphasis should now be placed on respecting, strengthening and developing organizations to which individuals have freely decided to belong. This calls for originality and inventiveness to maximally meet the social expectations for the majority of the people.

The paper states that the ability to respond to opportunities created by globalization depends on an integrated view of interdependent economic and social objectives. This has necessitated an integrated approach to the economic, social and political dimensions of public policy. The traditional compartmentalized approach, which deals with each of these dimensions separately and gives primacy to the economic policies on the assumption that distributional and other political goals can be dealt with subsequently has proved to be ineffective.

## **Comments**

This paper further highlights the importance of not compartmentalizing projects by development discipline, which include working conditions, decent work, job quality, social protection, education, poverty, nutrition, etc. To have truly significant impact on one aspect of MSEs and the informal economy, all aspects must be addressed in a concerted effort. The paper supports the concept that future programmes need to be integrated with all the disciplines of development that are relevant to the informal economy.

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## **A.18 Decent work pilot programme: Ghana**

C. van Empel, R. Hakemulder, G. Buckley, P. Holden, K. Ludwig and P. Poschen: *Decent work pilot programme: Ghana; Mission report, 20 January-7 February 2003* (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

### **Country**

Ghana.

### **Background and objective**

The purpose of the mission was to build on the results of two 'tripartite +' national workshops in October and consultations with constituents. The mission was designed to lay the basis for the implementation of the Decent Work Pilot Programme.

## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

Of the various findings and recommendations made, one stood out as being directly related to the Learning and Research Agenda. The authors suggest that assistance and capacity building for ILO constituents on policy formulation and dialogue is perceived to be important for the informal economy. In Ghana, as in many other countries, the informal economy is affected by many macro policies, often in negative ways that expand and perpetuate the informal economy as a poverty trap. There is a need for an explicit informal economy strategy that would take these policy linkages into account and include a set of measures contributing to poverty reduction and pro-poor growth in the informal economy.

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## Comments

The mission report highlights the potential importance of the macro-environment on MSEs and the informal economy.

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### A.19 Strategies and results of an active method of business training

J.C. Hiba: *Strategies and results of an active method of business training to improve the conditions and the environment of work in small and medium-sized businesses in Latin America* (Lima, ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 July 1999).

#### Countries

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

#### Background and objective

This report describes the experiences with WISE trainings in Latin America from 1987 through 1996. WISE puts emphasis on practical advice, emphasizing “how-to” rather than “you should”, the identification and application of low-cost solutions, and the development of solutions oriented to improve simultaneously the conditions of work, the quality of the productions, and the productivity of the work. WISE trainings have six basic principles that constitute the base of the methodology:

- to conceive improvements adapted to real local situations;
- to put emphasis on obtaining concrete results;
- to link working conditions with other managerial objectives;
- to use the technique of learning through practice;
- to encourage the exchange of experiences;
- to promote the participation of workers.

#### Lessons learned and recommendations

The strategy to introduce WISE to Latin America was to disseminate its methodology through business organizations, private and government agencies, and regional organizations dedicated to the promotion and development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Implementation was based on three essential elements:

1. the reinforcement of the capacity of institutions to operate with the methodology in a self-sufficient way;
2. the formation of high-level specialists on working conditions that could assist in the trainings;
3. the adaptation of technical content to the needs and practices of local participants.

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Numerous seminars were carried out with local chambers of commerce, universities and technical institutions. An important result observed was the interest of some of the institutions that acted like counterparts during the seminars. Several expressed their interest in including the WISE methodology into their own training programmes. Others were interested in participating in technical projects or in designing programmes for the dissemination of the methodology to the national level.

Other interesting results of the projects refer to the activities developed by the groups of business men and women who participated in the WISE workshops. For example, a group of ex-WISE participants founded a business circle called "Synergy" in Santiago, Chile. Their activities included mutual advice to continue improving working conditions and productivity, the exchange of commodities and industrial processes, the exploration of new business opportunities including exports, further training, obtaining business credits, and other business development activities.

Activities among ex-WISE participants and those involved with WISE workshops continued to develop in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. In Brazil in May 1993, after the first promotional activities developed in 1991 and the translation of the manuals in Portuguese in 1992, the Confederacy of Industries of the State of Sao Paulo sponsored a pilot seminar. From July to December of that year, the Brazilian Service of the Promotion of the Micro and Small Business (SEBRAE), together with the ILO, developed four more seminars. In 1994, the ILO supported SEBRAE in developing WISE trainings of national reach. That project, which extended through the end of 1996, resulted in the modification of training manuals according to the needs and local problems encountered in Brazil. By July 1996, 11 intensive seminars had been organized and 12 courses for the training of trainers and of managers of SEBRAE and other associated institutions.

Evaluations were conducted of many of the programmes in Latin America. According to beneficiaries polled, the main motives that encouraged them to carry out improvements was the technical knowledge acquired during the technical sessions, the low-cost solutions available, the ideas generated by visiting the workplaces of their peer co-participants, and the benefit of exchanging ideas with each other. All the managers recommended that other businessmen attend similar seminars. Many requested the continuity of technical support offered by the organizing institutions, trainers and coordinators. Others suggested continuing with the periodic meetings of the co-participants during the months after each seminar.

One of the main conclusions by the author was that the WISE training programmes offer a framework to promote new associations among neighboring businesses, for establishing and maintaining strategic commercial alliances, and for a variety of potential other reasons.

## **Comments**

After its initial introduction in Asia, the WISE methodology was used extensively throughout Latin America. Many of the training seminars resulted in entrepreneurs banding together to further the WISE experience. Most said that they would recommend WISE workshops to other managers. SEBRAE in Brazil took ownership of WISE and helped to expand it nationwide. While the traditional target audience is small and medium-sized businesses, mostly in the formal sector of the economy, the fact that its workshops often produce entrepreneurs with more demand for knowledge of how to improve working and employment conditions after the trainings is significant. These entrepreneurs become potential advocates for others to follow the same path, and when they join together with co-participants to form new associations or clubs, their voice for positive change is even stronger. The importance of forming alliances or networks among SME and informal economy operators and workers has been restated throughout the documents reviewed in this paper. WISE is a programme that has demonstrated that it can make positive progress among participants and it often leads to collaborating groups after the workshops are over.

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## **A.20 Proceedings of the National Seminar on Work Improvements in Small Enterprises (WISE)**

Occupational Safety and Health Center: *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Work Improvements in Small Enterprises (WISE)*, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines (6-7 March 1997).

### **Country**

Philippines.

### **Background and objective**

The Philippines was the first country in Asia and the Pacific region to implement a major national WISE programme. Project WISE was managed by the Bureau of Working Conditions, Department of Labor and Employment, with technical support from the ILO and sponsorship by UNDP. Then cooperating agencies participated in Project WISE: the National Wages and Productivity Commission, the Institute for Labor Studies, the Occupational Safety and Health Center, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Department of Trade and Industry, the UP-Institute for Small-Scale Enterprises, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, the Philippines Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, and the Labor Advisory Consultative Council.

Four pilot regions in the Philippines were targeted by the UNDP-sponsored project (1994-1996). These include the National Capital Region and Regions IV, VII and IX. The primary target groups were the owners and workers of small enterprises with employment ranging from ten to 99 workers in industries such as manufacturing, food processing and handicrafts. Project WISE was integrated into the regular programmes of the partner organizations to varying degrees. As part of the integrating process, advisory inspections using the WISE approach were expanded within the labour inspection system.

There were 906 participants in comprehensive entrepreneurs' workshops, 1,237 in entrepreneurs' awareness workshops and 658 in workers' awareness workshops during the project period. The National Seminar described was intended to pull together all the WISE experiences throughout the country and partners and to outline future steps in spreading WISE nationwide, while expanding its reach to the informal sector.

At the time of the seminar, WISE activities were being integrated into the Philippines Social Reform Agenda (SRA). It was stated in the proceedings that previous surveys have suggested that the WISE approach can be a potent tool to improve the working conditions of workers in the informal economy.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

During the seminar, participants were divided into 12 groups to list the most important WISE achievements to date and steps necessary to spread WISE nationwide. Steps identified included:

- establish sponsorship through a big brother/small brother plan, tapping private sector resources;
- strengthening the capacity of local government units to participate to promote WISE to their localities;
- support WISE graduates to organize and to conduct forums for other entrepreneurs and workers;
- intensify the availability of awareness courses for future potential participants;
- further develop strong linkages/networking with local government, NGOs, and grassroots, community-based organizations;

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- advocate the programme through a multi-media approach with focus on WISE success stories;
  - expand research and data-gathering capabilities;
  - establish a programme whereby government can give incentives to WISE implementers;
  - establish a national association of WISE advocates and practitioners;
  - strengthen the capacity of the labour inspectorate to implement an advisory approach to inspection;
  - recognize local champions/models through documented testimonies, awards and accreditation.

Since WISE implementation in the Philippines had traditionally targeted small formal sector operators and workers, it was recognized that the plan to expand its reach through the Social Reform Agenda (SRA) — which focuses on the poorest of the poor, particularly in the informal economy — might require a different approach. The following recommendations were given to reach this broader audience.

- Document the measurable success stories of the programmes.
- Sell the WISE ideas to key sectoral organizations by way of persuading them to participate in strategic pilot-testing exercises.
- Involve the media in the documentation of the programme experiences.
- Institute mechanisms for public recognition of successful implementers and introduce them to key SRA advocates.
- Work for the institutionalization of the WISE programme in the advocates of the SRA sectoral organizations, for only when the programme has become private sector-based could it be claimed to have been truly institutionalized.

### **Comments**

WISE has been extensively used and adapted in the Philippines. The recognition of stakeholders of its potential role in the SRA is unique.

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## **A.21 Occupational safety and health institutional capacity-building in Malaysia**

R. Rinehart: *Occupational safety and health institutional capacity-building in Malaysia: A feasibility study to identify and evaluate mechanisms to extend protection to the “self-employed”*, mission report, 27 August-20 September 2001, UNDP project MAL/99/006/A/01/NEX.

### **Country**

Malaysia.

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## **Background and objective**

The Government of Malaysia passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1994 (OSH Act 1994), comprehensive legislation that covers all workers in all sectors of the economy. The Act outlines requirements for all employers and self-employed persons to follow to protect safety and health. The Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) in the Ministry of Human Resources was tasked to ensure compliance with the Act. Since DOSH historically focused only on manufacturing and construction sectors of the economy, as specified by the Factories and Machinery Act of 1967, the Department requested assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to enhance its capacity to regulate the other economic sectors covered by the Act. The UNDP agreed to fund the project, entitled *Occupational Safety and Health Institutional Capacity-Building*, and requested technical assistance from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

One of many objectives of the project was to conduct a feasibility study on how DOSH can begin to provide occupational safety and health (OSH) information and services to self-employed persons. The following report provides background information, summarizes findings and gives recommendations in the form of an action plan for DOSH to take to reach these typically hard-to-reach workers, often in the informal sector.

## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

Of the several recommendations provided in the mission report, two are relevant to the topic of this literature review. The first was to pilot test a voucher programme to stimulate demand for training among self-employed workers. The other focused on promoting “best-practices” information collection by university graduate students.

While vouchers have never been used in the context of occupational safety and health training, they have been extensively used in recent years to stimulate demand for business development services training among the self-employed in numerous countries.<sup>23</sup> The voucher concept rose out of observations that both national and international development funds were often channeled directly to the supply of training programmes geared towards helping MSEs compete more effectively and grow; that is, funds went to the training providers who work in government or with NGOs. However, because there was little demand for the services, the programmes often failed or were not sustained. To overcome this problem, vouchers were issued directly to the MSEs to cover some or all of their costs to attend trainings, making the option of participating in a course more attractive. Each voucher also paid the training providers for a portion of the course costs, thus encouraging the creation of high-quality courses because competition grew among the providers. In addition, the vouchers increased recruitment efforts, since more trainees meant more money for the providers.

The author proposed that the voucher concept be extended to OSH training in Malaysia through an extensive micro-credit scheme for self-employed women run by Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM). It was recommended that DOSH should partner with AIM and the Malaysia National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to design and pilot test a voucher system for these workers to attend trainings. The vouchers should have safeguards that require certain attendance requirements for redemption. Each voucher should cover lost wages for the MSE participants to attend the training. It should also cover a portion of the costs to conduct the training, where 12 trainees would cover the entire costs of training (break-even point).

It was suggested that the initial target audience for the trainings be self-employed garment workers. AIM has thousands of these workers as members. This audience will allow DOSH to take advantage of a course manual developed by the ILO called I-WEB, specifically created to improve working conditions and increase the productivity and profitability of self-employed garment workers. I-WEB was created with action-oriented concepts similar to those used in the ILO Work

<sup>23</sup> C. Addis Botelho and L. Goldmark: *Paraguay vouchers: Revisited strategies for the development of training markets*; Business Services for Small Enterprises in Asia: *Developing markets and measuring performance*, International conference, Hanoi, Vietnam, 3-6 April 2000.



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Improvements for Small Enterprises (WISE) training programme. Both DOSH and NIOSH have experience conducting WISE workshops and should be able to adapt I-WEB for this project.

DOSH could coordinate with NIOSH to customize I-WEB (if needed) and to organize a train-the-trainer course for AIM staff and/or for staff from one of the organizations AIM works with that conducts other training for AIM. These newly trained trainers could then organize and conduct pilot workshops for an audience of self-employed garment workers, with technical assistance from DOSH and NIOSH.

It was further recommended that two target areas, one rural and one urban, should be selected for pilot workshops. These areas should have high concentrations of tailors. AIM could distribute vouchers to all of its members in these areas, explain how the vouchers work, and encourage them to participate in upcoming trainings. At a minimum, two I-WEB training workshops should be planned, with a goal of recruiting at least 12 self-employed persons for each. If there is more demand for workshops, more should be planned. After the trainings are completed, DOSH, NIOSH and AIM should discuss the impact and success of both the voucher scheme and the I-WEB training materials. Next steps should be developed to improve and expand the voucher concept, if warranted.

The funds initially required to cover the costs of vouchers and trainings during the pilot tests would not be great (likely under 10,000 Malaysian ringgit), and the possibility of using NIOSH research funds should be explored (NIOSH has set aside yearly research funds to improve OSH in the country). However, if the programme is successful and is expanded to other regions of the country and other industrial sectors, the costs would multiply quickly.

If the programme is a success, DOSH could explore the possibility of soliciting public service funds from large national and multinational corporations operating in Malaysia. For any company interested in supporting the effort, DOSH could agree to help promote public relations and advertise the contribution the company is making to improve working conditions and the growth of Malaysia's economy.

In addition to identifying sources of funds from the private sector within the country, the possibility of support from international donor agencies should be explored. Extending the voucher concept to provide OSH information directly to MSEs is a new idea, and there may be organizations that would like to promote and improve such a programme and possibly extend the concept to other countries.

The report stated that DOSH also could collaborate with NIOSH to funnel research funds to characterize the OSH needs and "best practices" of self-employed persons by developing a "request for proposals", up to 20,000 Malaysian ringgit each, targeted towards supporting two to three OSH graduate students in Malaysian universities to study self-employed workplaces. The possibility of using NIOSH research funds to support students to directly characterize OSH hazards, best practices, training needs and to develop training curricula for self-employed persons (e.g. among motor workshops or home-based shoe makers) was a topic of discussion at NIOSH during a meeting, and the response from the Director was positive. Using NIOSH funds in this manner will also help expand the number of OSH experts in Malaysia, a necessary complement to a rapidly industrializing society. It will also raise the awareness of OSH problems and solutions among the self-employed.

## **Comments**

This mission report suggested two approaches to promote working and employment conditions that have not been suggested by other studies reviewed. One is to extend the voucher concept, which has a history of use in the business development services community, to these issues. The other is to encourage academia to play a role in identifying and characterizing the needs, demands and potential outreach opportunities for self-employed workers. Using resources to focus graduate students on working and employment conditions in the informal economy would increase expertise and knowledge locally and may be a positive long-term contribution to help the working poor improve their lives.

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## **A.22 Health care for small-scale employees in developing countries**

A. Kayumba and L.B. Mlingi: "Healthcare: An unreachable star for small-scale employees in developing countries", in *African Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety*, Vol. 13, No. 1, April 2003, pp. 7-10.

### **Country**

United Republic of Tanzania.

### **Background and objective**

The authors state that an unmet need of workers' communities in the informal sector and SMEs in developing countries is accessibility to affordable and quality medical services. In some areas of the United Republic of Tanzania, the ILO tried to establish a prepaid scheme for workers in the informal sector. The scheme could not be sustained since, to most Tanzanians, the concept of paying for medical care when one is not yet sick was new – and it still is. Those registered in the scheme were also required to contribute for some time before they were allowed to receive medical care. There are growing numbers of health-care schemes for the formal sector, but the informal sector "have been left to fend for themselves". Employees and other people in the informal sector depend on their daily-spent physical energies to earn daily wages to feed themselves and their extended families. These workers are indirectly denied access to health care because they cannot afford services.

A pilot project has been initiated to form the non-profit NGO called the Tanzanian Occupational Health Institute (TOHS). Individual entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector cannot join; they must join as groups. To date, 758 workers and family members have joined the scheme.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

There is an increased use of health and safety facilities among participating MSEs. Fifty-four per cent of the MSE groups have established health and safety committees. Each group also has health and safety facilities, such as dustbins, drinking water buckets and first-aid kits. There is an increased availability of community health providers among participating groups. It was noted that many have trained first-aid providers who are providing first-aid services to group members and are also training other members within the group.

One weaknesses of the pilot project is that the available funds, collected through MSE contributions, are not adequate to sustain the medical scheme. Another is that there is an irregular contribution to the scheme. Part of this is due to the seasonal nature of the work done by the majority of the operators. Thus their income is not regular.

Lessons learned include that since income varies, depending on market availability, contributions toward the scheme should be flexible to allow members to contribute more during a season with a high profit, but the authors noted that a widespread campaign is required for this to happen. Also, a grace period of more than two years, when members are contributing but are also utilizing the start-up fund to have access to medical services, is important for the community health-care fund to be sustainable. Finally, the health-care scheme should go hand-in-hand with promotion measures to prevent disease.

This pilot project was the first of its kind, and the authors feel that it could be replicated to serve more members. Their conclusion is that there is a great demand from workers in the informal sector, which is rising with the increasing size of the informal economy, but more donor funds are needed for start-up funds and to extend grace periods for these low-income members.

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## Comments

While this scheme is not sustainable in the short term because of start-up costs and the need for grace periods, it may prove to be self-sufficient in the long term. The programme encourages entrepreneurs and workers to form groups, which could give them more voice in making positive changes to their working conditions and family health situations. Examples of preventative measures to improve occupational safety and health were given. In addition, these types of schemes may be useful for promoting maternity protection and playing a positive role in work-family issues. However, the main barrier is that small-scale operators and workers cannot afford to join schemes in the short term if they do not see immediate benefits, and the recognition for buying into a health-care scheme when one is healthy is lacking. Awareness-raising efforts may be necessary for these types of schemes to reach large audiences.

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### A.23 A focus on working women and child care

M.T. Ruel, B. de la Brière, K. Hallman, A. Quisumbing and N. Coj: *Does subsidized childcare help poor working women in urban areas? Evaluation of a government-sponsored program in Guatemala City*, FCND Discussion Paper No. 131 (Washington, DC, International Food Policy Research Institute, April 2002).<sup>24</sup>

#### Country

Guatemala.

#### Background and objective

The *Hogares Comunitarios* programme (community day-care centres) was established in Guatemala City in 1991 as a direct response to the needs for affordable and reliable child care for women in urban Guatemala. The government-sponsored pilot programme was designed as a strategy to alleviate poverty by proving that working parents with low-cost, quality child care within their communities. The pilot programme rapidly expanded to both urban and rural areas of 22 departments in the country. By 1998, the programme comprised 1,200 *hogares comunitarios* that cared for approximately 10,000 children aged 0 to 7 years. In 2001, IFPRI performed an evaluation by survey of the programme's effectiveness. USAID and DFID supported the evaluation.

According to the authors, rapid urbanization has meant an increase in the number and percentage of households headed by single women. Almost one-quarter of the households in the city are now headed by a female. Because at least half of these urban female-headed households are poor, this group is particularly vulnerable to food insecurity and needs help with employment opportunities and child-care opportunities.

The share of urban women who work for an income in Guatemala increased to 28 per cent in 1999, 20 per cent more than the beginning of the decade. Low-income mothers are even more likely to work for pay – 37 per cent – according to the IFPRI survey. They tend to be poorer than non-working mothers and more likely to be of indigenous ethnicity.

The majority – 63 per cent – of urban Guatemalan women hold jobs in the informal sector where they work in petty trading, domestic service, tortilla shops and other eateries. Formal sector employment opportunities are growing in the country, but the lack of available child care limits the ability of many women to take advantage of better paying jobs where children cannot accompany

<sup>24</sup> Available at <http://www.ifpri.org/divs/fcnd/dp/papers/fcndp131.pdf>.

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their mothers to work. As a result, many single women heading households have little choice but to work in the informal sector, despite low pay, because it offers them the flexibility to care for their children while they work. Over 40 per cent of the randomly selected mothers working in the slums of Guatemala City were caring for their children themselves while working for pay.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

According to the authors, the programme seems to be reaching its targeted population: families of working parents with few resources and particularly families where mothers are the main income-earner. Beneficiary mothers appear more likely to have salaries, and possibly more stable employment, than mothers who use other child-care arrangements. Also benefiting from the programme are the caregivers themselves, who tend to be older, less-educated mothers with possibly fewer opportunities to work outside the home.

At this time, few poor urban households in Guatemala City opt to use public child-care services. However, the survey suggests that this is because of the low supply (limited number of *hogares*) rather than a lack of demand. The authors state that given its important contribution in enabling mothers to work and their children to be well cared for, the *Hogares Comunitarios* programme has proven itself worthy of expansion.

They also conclude that reducing barriers to obtaining employment is crucial for helping to lift women and their families in the urban slums of Guatemala out of poverty. Access to reliable and affordable child care can enable mothers to work in settings not compatible with caring for their kids and often in higher paying work. Increasing the availability of subsidized formal day care in poor urban areas is a viable option, which can increase the labour participation rates of women, and ensure safe and reliable child care for preschoolers.

### **Comments**

Similar to the Bolivian *pidis* project reviewed in this document, this paper highlights the potential importance of low-cost child-care facilities for the working poor, particularly working women. When no options exist, women are often forced to take their children with them to work. This may expose young children to occupational safety and health hazards as well as prevent women from obtaining higher paying jobs where children are not allowed. The World Bank has promoted this model of government-subsidized child-care centres in many countries. Besides contributing in a positive way to work-family issues, they may provide an avenue to promote other working conditions issues to the parents that use these facilities.

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## **A.24 Business centres for small enterprises development**

M. Sievers, K. Haftendorn and A. Bessler: *Business centres for small enterprise development: Experiences and lessons from Eastern Europe*, SEED Working Paper No. 57 (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

### **Country**

Global.

### **Background and objective**

Donors and banks have supported the development of business centres that provide business development services (BDS) in a private sector-like manner. The business centre (BC) is a structure set up to deliver services to entrepreneurs with the aim of strengthening the job creation potential, productivity and competitiveness of MSEs. The paper explores the risks and benefits of several

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different BCs, including those established by the ILO, UNIDO, Swisscontact, USAID, IADB and the EU. The focus is on Eastern Europe, but includes activities in Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Indonesia, Peru and the Philippines.

Business centres are usually NGOs or private enterprises set up under an existing national legal framework that provides BDS directly to MSEs. There is a wide range of names for similar structures, including enterprise development agencies or centres (EDA, EDC), business support or service centres (BSC), local enterprise agencies (LEA) and others

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

By being market-driven, some centres have been able to serve a large number of enterprises, ensuring an institutional sustainability based on a variety of income sources. The income generated by these BCs usually comes not only from MSEs, but also from local donors and authorities that contract the BC as a consulting company. However, some BCs have not achieved financial self-sustainability. While reasons vary, frequently BCs have either not had the appropriate exit strategy from funding or have found it difficult to achieve the right mix of service products that would generate income and address vital MSE needs at the same time. Success is shown to depend on a variety of factors, including a thorough market assessment, the right mix of MSE services and a realistic exit strategy from external funding.

According to the report, future challenges for the BC approach include job quality. Apart from their potential for income and employment generation, BCs could play an important local economic development role by promoting the local MSE sector and supporting the setting up of associations that strengthen the voice of micro-entrepreneurs in a given region. Little attention has been given to job quality aspects in MSEs. The report states that the BCs could be stronger in raising awareness of entrepreneurs to the fact that improving labour standards or working conditions can have a positive impact on enterprise productivity and competitiveness.

The report concludes that the role of subsidies and the way sustainability of a BC is defined are still unresolved issues. For example, should “commercial sustainability” be the only criteria or should sustainability be defined on grounds other than solely financial?

### **Comments**

Business centres may provide an entry point to disseminate working and employment conditions principles to MSEs, particularly if they are framed in a way to promote productivity and competitiveness. These centres have been established in many countries, and it may be worth investigating their reach in target countries for future working conditions projects.

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## **A.25 Safety and health at work in small and medium-scale tanneries in India**

J. Hannak: “An approach to safety and health at work in small and medium-scale tanneries in India”, in *Asian-Pacific Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety*, Vol. 10, No. 2, July 2003, pp. 60-63.<sup>25</sup>

### **Country**

India.

<sup>25</sup> Summary also includes additional information from personal communication with the author.

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## **Background and objective**

UNIDO instituted a regional programme for pollution control in the tanning industry in South and Southeast Asia in 1996. Initially, the programme focused on assisting the tanning industry in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand in dealing with the environmental impacts of leather production. Occupational safety and health (OSH) was also identified as a critical issue, and a separate programme component was included. A detailed checklist was prepared to assess baseline safety and health hazards and work practices in tanneries in China, India, Indonesia and Nepal through the assistance of national experts and counterpart organizations. The level of active participation by entrepreneurs and workers on-site varied from country to country. In India, the researchers were able to follow a largely participatory approach. The checklist and subsequent interventions were modeled to a large extent after the ILO WISE programme.

In India, an assessment of the available support structures for the tanning industry indicated that support in the form of inspections and advice on the part of safety and health enforcement agencies was limited. At the same time, small-scale tanners faced difficulties in accessing OSH-related consulting services and appropriate reference materials. No formal system was in place for collecting, compiling and disseminating safety and health information and demonstrating best practices.

## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

During initial participatory planning sessions with the various stakeholders, it became clear that the tanners understood the need to address OSH issues by wanting to integrate these with measures of higher priority, such as improving productivity and controlling environmental impacts to ensure their immediate survival. The final strategy developed built on three main principles.

1. Build on local practices/problems with active stakeholder participation.
2. Use “good housekeeping” as a starting point and “door opener”.
3. Dissemination of good practices using a “know-how through show-how” approach, including selection of local “champion” enterprises.

Cluster workshops were organized, two-page factsheets developed, and a comprehensive action-checklist tool was prepared. While the team of international and national UNIDO experts conducted the initial rounds of cluster workshops, locally trained trainers and facilitators, drawn from model tanneries, tanners’ associations and the Central Leather Research Institute, conducted subsequent workshops.

The sustained application of the approach was initially limited by the absence of a coordinating body at the national level. However, with international support, the sector-specific safety and health consulting and monitoring services were strengthened. Also, a university “services cell” was created to ensure access to industrial hygiene facilities to conduct hazard assessment, exposure monitoring, guidance in preparation of action plans, and trainings at subsidized rates.

There is still need to strengthen the networking support to small and medium-scale leather companies in the different leather clusters. With a focus on prevention, the formation of local information hubs at the cluster level is expected to facilitate continued training activities and the consolidation and dissemination of “best practices” at the enterprise and cluster levels.

## **Comments**

The interventions discussed by this paper exemplify the positive benefits of using the ILO WISE approach to making improvements in safety and health, and that the approach can be tailor-made to pertain to a specific sector of industry. The formation of “clusters” and focusing attention at the cluster level appears to be a good model for future interventions in other sectors.

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## **A.26 Business development services for small enterprises**

Committee of Donor Agencies for Small Enterprise Development: *Business development services for small enterprises: Guiding principles for donor intervention*, 2001 edition (Washington, DC, February 2001).<sup>26</sup>

### **Country**

Global.

### **Background and objective**

The ultimate objective of donor intervention in business development services (BDS) is to improve small enterprise (SE) performance in developing countries, as a means to achieve higher economic growth and employment, reduce poverty and meet social objectives. Better business development services (BDS) is only one means to these ends. Improving small enterprise performance requires many ingredients and non-financial services, and expanding markets for business development services for SE products and services.

BDS include training, consultancy and advisory services, marketing assistance, information technology development and transfer, and business linkage promotion. The delivery of BDS as part of business-to-business relationships — including supplier/buyer, subcontracting, franchise and licensing relationships — is particularly common for smaller firms. Business associations and informal business networks are another vehicle for delivering services to SEs. Designing interventions to promote BDS market development within these “business systems” is a challenge for donors.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

Traditionally, donors and governments have intervened in BDS markets at the level of the BDS transaction: directly providing services to SEs through public BDS providers, or permanently subsidizing services delivered by other BDS providers. Donors and government have historically tended to substitute for underdeveloped BDS markets, possibly crowding out existing or potential commercial providers of services. Traditional approaches have failed to achieve high outreach (access to services by a large proportion of the target population of SEs), since the numbers of SEs served is limited by the amount of subsidies available. In addition, institutional sustainability has been low, since programmes often cease when public funds are exhausted.

In the new BDS market development paradigm proposed by the authors, efforts should be driven by the belief that the objectives of outreach and sustainability can only be achieved in well-driven markets for BDS, and not by direct provision by donors and governments. This shifts the focus of public and donor intervention away from direct provision and subsidies at the level of the BDS transaction, toward facilitation of a sustained increase in the demand and supply of services.

The authors argue that donor and government support should be shifted away from direct support to particular BDS providers toward facilitation functions that develop the market in a sustainable way. In other words, donors and governments should maintain a low profile at the level of BDS transaction, and work primarily through BDS facilitators rather than BDS providers. The reason is that, when players in BDS markets become aware of donor involvement, they may become oriented more towards the donor than to their own clients. While any intervention distorts the market, some of the more adverse effects can be avoided if donors are willing to adopt a low profile when intervening in BDS markets.

<sup>26</sup> This document can be found at the following website: [www.ilo.org/dyn/bds/bdsresearch.globalDCDocs?p\\_doc\\_type=DCGUIDE&p\\_lang=en](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/bds/bdsresearch.globalDCDocs?p_doc_type=DCGUIDE&p_lang=en). It is available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Bahasa Indonesian and Vietnamese.

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Donors need to ensure accountability in the use of their funds, and are often focused on the broader social and economic objectives of employment, enterprise competitiveness and poverty alleviation. It is unrealistic for donors to expect that BDS providers and facilitators will undertake evaluations that are not relevant to their operations. This often means that the cost of measuring the impact of BDS programmes on market development or social/economic impact must be borne by donors. The development of BDS markets to provide greater outreach and sustainability thus shifts donor focus to the approach and impact, and may involve less control and predictability for the donor than an institutional development approach.

Further, the recognition of the difference between “perceived needs” and “real needs” should be made, and appropriate weight should be given to perceived needs, relative to the more traditional expert assessment of real needs.

## **Comments**

In the context of improving working and employment conditions in MSEs and the informal economy, these same principles likely apply, however, at a more grassroots level.

Productivity and working conditions are linked, as exemplified by successful programmes like the ILO WISE programme and its offshoots. But this relationship can be inversed if care is not taken. Increased productivity based purely on “perceived needs”, from the perspective of entrepreneurs, can lead to decreased working conditions if, for example, larger amounts of chemicals are used without knowledge of the potential adverse occupational safety and health and environmental consequences.

Careful consideration for donor intervention based solely on the market-driven paradigm are needed when “perceived needs” related to working and employment conditions are formulated without knowledge of the potential long-term health and social consequences of actions because of inadequate education, which typifies the informal sector.

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## **A.27 Efforts to combat international child labour**

Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB): *Faces of change: Highlights of US Department of Labor efforts to combat international child labor* (Washington, DC, 2003).<sup>27</sup>

### **Country**

Global.

### **Background and objective**

Since 1995, USDOL has contributed to more than 100 child labour programmes in over 50 countries. For many of these initiatives, USDOL has partnered with the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC). Most of the programmes highlighted in the document are those developed in partnership with ILO-IPEC.

The report is divided into three main sections: (1) direct interventions; (2) data collection; and (3) partnerships. The argument is made that all three are needed together to make a project successful. Each section is further divided into sub-themes, and the report gives numerous brief summaries of projects and how they achieved success. While many projects are briefly described in

<sup>27</sup> Available at <http://www.dol.gov/ILAB/media/reports/iclp/faceschange/facesofchange.pdf>.



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the document, separate final reports and evaluations for individual projects were generally not available to include in this review.

## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

According to the report, direct interventions include a range of catalysts for withdrawing and preventing children from labour. *Awareness raising* activities bring child labour issues and programmes to the attention of a community and the entire country to encourage understanding, support and participation. *Alternative income generation* makes possible new sources of family income, such as small businesses, so families are no longer dependent on children's earnings. *Alternative production processes* make child labour unprofitable and unnecessary. Education is perhaps the most effective direct intervention of all. Accessible, quality, affordable education has proven to be such a strong incentive for withdrawing children from labour and preventing them from entering work, that education forms a part of every project.

Data collection establishes the basis for selecting and shaping a programme's direct interventions. Through ILO-IPEC's Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC), central statistical offices in several countries have conducted household surveys that yield national estimates on the number of working children. SIMPOC rapid assessment surveys, conducted by in-country research teams, employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the nature and extent of hazardous and exploitative child labour. Baseline surveys also use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to provide benchmark information for a specific target population. This information is later used for programme design, implementation and monitoring.

Consistent with the ILO's own tripartite composition, programmes frequently partner with governments, employers and workers. Projects always have the support of host country *governments*. *Non-governmental organizations* serve as implementing agencies, and also occasionally provide financial or initial planning assistance. Partnerships with *community-based organizations* integrate the efforts of newly created and existing citizen groups to combat child labour. The involvement of *volunteers and contributors* multiply an effort's impact. Finally, *employer organizations* take an active part in awareness raising, monitoring and education.

For example, in Bangladesh, a project to eliminate child labour in the construction industry illustrated how multiple interventions and partnerships are combined in a single effort. In this country, some families — including the youngest children — spend their days breaking rocks into construction gravel. After ILO-IPEC completed a data collection survey that identified children working in the construction sector within targeted geographical regions, non-governmental organization mobilizers went door-to-door to raise awareness and motivate parents to participate in a programme. The support of influential community members was essential in winning over parents. A local construction company helped arrange classroom space for non-formal education activities for children who had previously had no schooling, in order to prepare them for enrollment in public schools. With the help of project micro-credits, workshop training and NGO support, some of the parents, particularly women, are generating income outside of construction-related activities. Revenues from new businesses compensate for the children's lost earnings so they can attend school. Company representatives, along with parents, teachers and local leaders, belong to a committee that monitors project activities and it is anticipated that they will sustain the activities when the project ends.

Another project summarized in the document focused on child labour in the deep-sea fishing sector in the Philippines. In a separate final report for that project,<sup>28</sup> it was recommended that future strategies should include the following:

- Seek ways and means to continue to understand the circumstances surrounding the existence and persistence of child labour in this sector from the perspectives of both the household and community. Time and in-depth knowledge are two requisite necessities.

<sup>28</sup> IPEC: *Children in Pa-aling and KubKub fishing expeditions: An assessment report for the deep-sea and fishing sector studies* (Geneva, January 2003).

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Care should be taken to adapt measures that provide sufficient time to allow households and communities to pursue a knowledge-based set of strategies in combating child labour in its worst form.

- Increase advocacy by addressing the root causes of the child labour phenomenon as seen and understood by the families, communities and other concerned parties. Any attempt at community intervention, or policy-formulation or new government regulations should at the outset seriously consider the fact that this is a market-driven and market-based industry, hence the need for the operators to be an active collaborator in all the pursuits. How operators can include in their accounting process and decision-making the realities of declining fish yields vis-à-vis the use of child labour — the true social cost — is by far the greatest challenge.

For the deep-sea fishing project, priority areas that require immediate improvement, immediate intervention or immediate understanding are:

- employment and working conditions (to include low wages, hazard pay, insurance);
- assessment of environmental effects (now or never especially for operators);
- overall coastal community economy of target sites (to include fish yields, fish stocks, small/medium/large scale fishing ventures over time);
- socio-political-cultural-economic impacts and alternatives of abolishing child labour (i.e. push and pull factors).

## **Comments**

Much activity to reduce or eliminate the worst forms of child labour has occurred throughout the world. Recommendations and lessons learned from many of the direct intervention projects, however, are not available in the mainstream literature. The USDOL document reviewed provided an abbreviated summary of numerous projects, mostly conducted by ILO-IPEC. The main theme that resonated throughout the report is the synergy of multiple approaches makes successful results possible, which likely applies to efforts to improve working and employment conditions to micro and small enterprises and workers in the informal economy in general. It will be helpful to have more thorough evaluation reports of the IPEC and USDOL initiatives, that include success and failures, to help in the design of future programmes.

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## **A.28 Hispanic activities and initiatives**

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), US Department of Labor.

### **Country**

United States.

### **Background and objective**

The Hispanic population is growing rapidly in the United States, and Hispanic workers have a disproportionately high occupational fatality rate as compared to non-Hispanic workers. They are over represented in the high-risk industries for injury and illness (e.g. construction) and potential language barriers exist. Many of these workers and entrepreneurs operate in the informal economy. OSHA is taking a multi-pronged approach to improving safety and health for and providing outreach and assistance to the Hispanic community.

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The following summarizes the activities and new initiatives that OSHA is pursuing.

### Current and past activities

- Established a Hispanic Workers Task Force dedicated to pursuing creative solutions to improve the agency's outreach to and prevent fatalities among Hispanic workers.
- Added Spanish-speaking capabilities to the OSHA national hotline (1-800-321-OSHA), which receives about 1,000 calls each month.
- Introduced a Spanish Web page ([www.osha.gov/as/opa/spanish/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/as/opa/spanish/index.html)), which has recorded a significant increase in hits: from 2,500 in February 2002 to over 28,500 in February 2003.
- Issued publications in Spanish, such as *All about OSHA*, *OSHA: Ready to help you*, *OSHA: Employee workplace rights*, and a poster entitled *Job safety and health protection*.
- Launched national public service announcement (PSA) outreach campaigns. For example, one campaign in April of 2003 released two PSAs to over 650 Spanish radio stations across the country. One spot was targeted at employees and their families; the other targeted employers. The first month figures show the spots played 93 times reaching 15.2 million listeners. OSHA is following up with additional Spanish language outreach through the Hispanic Radio Network.
- Increased the number of fluent Spanish-speaking employees.
- Participated in the 2002 National Safety Congress and Expo, presenting best practices and information on the US-Mexico Border Issues.
- Co-sponsored the *Second Hispanic Forum on a Safe and Healthy Environment*, in October of 2002 in San Diego, California.
- Awarded six new grants in September 2002 with a Hispanic outreach component that targeted training in ergonomics, construction and institutional competency building.
- Renewed 26 grants with a Hispanic component. These grants targeted topics such as blood-borne pathogens; construction; electrical power generation, transmission and distribution; ergonomics; *hard-to-reach workers*; and institutional competency building.
- Increased the number of training centres to help meet the increase demand for training and provide added value to their outreach efforts, including Spanish language courses.
- Developed alliances and other cooperative relationships at the national and regional level to provide outreach material to the Hispanic community.
- Offered a variety of occupational safety and health programmes, including the ten-hour construction course in various OSHA regions.
- Appointed Hispanic coordinators in each region to coordinate activities and serve as the region's liaison to the Agency's Hispanic Task Force and National Office.

### New initiatives

- Working with the 55 Mexican consulates around the nation to promote the Justice and Equality in the Workplace programme.
- Compiling an internal national clearinghouse for various publications, training materials and videos that are available in Spanish in various regions around the country to share resources and collaborative efforts at national and local levels.
- Expanding participation in its Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) among Hispanic employers and other companies that employ Spanish-speaking workers.

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- Developing an English-to-Spanish dictionary of 239 general OSHA terms.
  - Planning a Hispanic Summit with the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH) to be held in 2004.
  - Creating an immigrant worker video to be produced in 2004. The production will be initially in English and Spanish. As funds permit, OSHA plans to translate the video into other languages.

### **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The traditional regulatory model of sending inspectors to worksites is not effective by itself to reach Hispanic/immigrant workers, primarily because there are so many small-scale activities, many of which are “under the radar screen” of available information. Non-traditional means to reach these workers and their employers are needed.

### **Comments**

OSHA is aggressively developing strategies and promoting programmes that have the potential to disseminate occupational safety and health information to hard-to-reach, at-risk workers. One strategy that OSHA is taking involves developing alliances with community-based organizations and other groups that interact with these workers.

It is not clear how effectively these non-regulatory measures are improving the conditions of work among Hispanic workers, because the effectiveness of current data collections systems to capture injury and illness statistics among these workers, many of which are undocumented, is questionable. However, OSHA, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, other government agencies and many researchers in academia are examining how best to establish reliable surveillance systems and to conduct meaningful interventions, mainly at the community grassroots level. Needless to say, promoting occupational safety and health among Hispanic workers, and immigrants in general, is an active area of activity in the United States, and many workshops, symposiums and conferences on the topic have or are being organized to promote best practices and lessons learned.

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## **A.29 Workers in the urban “informal” food sector**

G. Yasmeen: *Workers in the urban “informal” food sector: Innovative organizing strategies* (Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization).<sup>29</sup>

### **Country**

South and Southeast Asia, global.

### **Background and objective**

The important role of the “informal” food sector (IFS) for the food security of the urban poor is well-documented. Knowledge of this diverse sector indicates that selling both raw and prepared foodstuffs in public spaces and in home-based retailing environments is an important livelihood, often for women. The article argues that securing access to urban space – a highly coveted commodity in rapidly growing cities – is a political issue that is best addressed when food micro-entrepreneurs are well-organized among themselves. Improvements, such as hygiene, living and

<sup>29</sup> Available at <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/Y1931M/y1931m05.htm>, September 2004.

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working conditions, take place with investments in the social capital of food vendors resulting from more effective dissemination of information.

## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

In most cities, in order to manage the IFS effectively, a proactive dialog needs to be established among workers, the municipal authorities and other local stakeholders, such as the police and general public. In addition, recognizing the significant contribution of the informal sector is of crucial importance for gender relations because women's work is disproportionately located within this sphere compared to men. Much of women's work is therefore invisible to policymakers, who do not see the informal contribution in most official documentation and statistics.

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) based in India is the best-known example of a membership organization of informal sector micro-entrepreneurs and workers. SEWA spurred the establishment of the National Alliance of Street Vendors in India (NASVI) in 1998, which lobbies for the rights and well-being of all street vendors in the country.<sup>30</sup> A number of organizations outside the subcontinent have been either inspired or cofounded by SEWA:

- Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in Durban, South Africa;
- StreetNet, an international alliance of street vendors ([www.streetnet.org.za](http://www.streetnet.org.za));
- HomeNet, an international alliance of home-based workers ([www.gnipc.org/homenet](http://www.gnipc.org/homenet));
- Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), a global research and policy-making network involving the afore-mentioned groups and their allies in civil society organizations, international agencies and academic institutions ([www.wiego.org](http://www.wiego.org)).

SEWA and the above organizations are not exclusively focused on the IFS, although the preparation and sale of foodstuffs is one of the primary activities of their memberships. There are other examples of food-centred organizations that are not as well known as SEWA and its offspring. An example given in the report included the Cebu City United Vendors' Association (CCUVA), which is an association of numerous affiliate organizations, many dominated by women.

According to the author, a number of occupational safety and health issues related to food vending would be more adequately addressed if vendors were organized and therefore in a more economically and spatially secure position. The interest in organizing such groups makes it clear that exchanges among developing countries to diffuse the experiences of SEWA, CCUVA, and other groups are needed to facilitate the creation of similar food vendors' organizations where they are needed.

As such, the best way to promote the interests of the IFS is to facilitate the creation of membership-based organizations comprised of food vendors and others who gain their livelihood from the preparation and sale of food in cities. Although more research may be needed on the various ways in which these nascent organizations function, generally speaking, more associations like SEWA, SEWU and CCUVA are needed in developing countries to act as collective voices for people in the IFS. Such organizations can help IFS workers to access financing, social protection and, most of all, secure and affordable spaces in which to conduct business.

Finally, there is a need for conceptually innovative participatory action research, with an emphasis on the policies and programmes needed at the neighborhood, city, regional, national and international scales. Such research can facilitate the diffusion of strategic information and result in the creation of transparent, accountable and democratic membership-based organizations that represent the interests of the urban IFS.

<sup>30</sup> In December 2003, the Government of India adopted a national policy on street vendors that officially recognizes workers in this sector.

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## Comments

This article highlights the importance having a collective voice representing the interests of IFS workers to promote their social and economic situations. There are a select few well-established organizations that have successfully included these informal sector workers, and the author argues that these efforts should be promoted and expanded.

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### A.30 Assessment of regional programme on micro and small enterprises

A. Overy-Miehlbradt: *Assessment of Regional Programme on Micro and Small Enterprises Development and Workers' Protection (in the Asia and Pacific region)* (Bangkok, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, May 1998).

#### Countries

Malaysia, Nepal and the Philippines.

#### Background and objective

The ILO implemented the Regional Programme on Micro and Small Enterprises Development and Workers' Protection — or Work Improvement and Development of Enterprise (WIDE) programme — to address the interconnected problems of low productivity, low profits and poor working conditions in MSEs in the Asian and Pacific Region. The long-term goal of the programme was to contribute to enabling MSEs to grow, develop and increase income and productivity, as well as improve working conditions with the aim of generating increasing numbers of quality jobs in this sector over the next decade.

The ILO designed the pilot phase of the WIDE programme to test the following hypothesis:

*The concepts developed under ILO Improve Your Business and the Work Improvement in Small Enterprises programmes can be effectively applied to smaller enterprises in an integrated fashion.*

During calendar year 1997, ILO partner organizations in the Philippines, Nepal and Malaysia developed and tested training curricula in workshops for micro and small enterprises in specific subsectors. Major accomplishments included:

- **testing training strategies.** The pilot phase tested five different training courses that integrated enterprise management and working conditions;
- **testing integration of training and other services.** The experiences of several implementing organizations provided strategies and preliminary impact information on integrating other business development services with training.;
- **developing Improve Your Work Environment and Business (IWEB) training package,** which can be adapted for local and subsector specific settings;
- **building capacity** of partners and other participating organizations;
- **increasing awareness** about the integrated problems of low profit, low productivity and poor working conditions.

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## **Lessons learned and recommendations**

The preliminary impact assessment found that there was tangible impact in the participating enterprises in terms of both increased potential for higher profits and improved working conditions. There were numerous business improvements reported by the entrepreneurs and seen during enterprise visits in the areas of marketing, finance, management, production and working conditions. Several non-business changes were also noted, particularly increased family safety and improved living environments. The report suggested that the primary hypothesis list above cannot be rejected.

In the Philippines, those training courses that integrated working conditions with other business topics created the most impact in working conditions. The Nepali and Malaysian training spent relatively more time on productivity and physical environment topics. A future course could create a more balanced impact by integrating the topics, but including sufficient time for discussions of working conditions and productivity. Those courses with more subsector-specific information provided entrepreneurs with the most useful suggestions for improving their enterprises.

The suggestions for improvements in working conditions which entrepreneurs tended to accept were concrete with clear benefits, quick-to-implement, low-cost or no-cost, and linked to another aspect of business improvement. The management suggestions which entrepreneurs implemented quickly were those that were easy and had an immediate effect on profits or the entrepreneur's understanding of her business. Making easy changes that produced immediate benefits empowered entrepreneurs to attempt more complicated or costly changes.

The most effective training methodologies were the inclusion of entrepreneurs as trainers; including an enterprise visit as part of the training course; emphasizing the importance of the entrepreneur in improving his/her own business; making the training action oriented and using adult learning techniques; presenting topics in a simple manner and using appropriate training schedules; promoting worker involvement.

Fostering demand for the training courses was a problem of all implementing organizations. The most effective marketing strategies were personal contact with target participants and marketing through community and association leaders. While 83 per cent of the Philippine training participants were women, the other countries had limited success in reaching out to women. In family businesses in the Philippines, generally the women attended the training courses and were successful in making changes in their enterprises.

All implementing organizations felt that follow-up advisory services were essential to promoting impact at the enterprise level and were worth the costs. The programme experience suggests that integrating training with other business services creates a synergy at the enterprise level, which multiplies impact.

The implementing organizations could have benefited from more input, particularly related to working conditions. The training of trainers was a useful way to build capacity, but implementing organizations agree that more strict screening of trainers was needed. Cooperating with grassroots associations of entrepreneurs provided a number of important benefits in programme implementation, including lowering costs and increasing impact. All the implementing organizations have received requests for additional training courses and several have already replicated the training.

In conclusion, future activities should include further develop the training content, particularly subsector specific information; target micro and small entrepreneurs separately; improve strategies for fostering demand; build on and increase the participation of women entrepreneurs; integrate training and other enterprise services; collaborate with self-help groups and local entrepreneurs' associations; emphasize sustainability and replication; increase cross-country interaction.

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## **Comments**

This document critically analyzed an ILO initiative that married two widespread training programmes, IYB and WISE, into one package geared towards MSEs. The programmes focused on business development and working conditions, respectively. It is one of the few project summaries reviewed here that reported “lessons learned” from such efforts and provided recommendations for future programmes.

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