



DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP AND BUSINESS SKILLS FOR INFORMAL WOMEN WORKERS IN FAIR TRADE

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About WIEGO

- WIEGO is an action-policy-research network focusing on the economic empowerment of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy.
- WIEGO believes all workers should have economic opportunities and equal rights, and be able to determine the conditions of their work and lives.
- Key to this is organization in strong, democratic, membership based organizations (MBO), such as cooperatives, trade unions, associations etc, through which informal workers can gain representative voice at local, national and international levels.
- WIEGO supports the organization & representation of informal workers through research, capacity building, facilitating networking, supporting their advocacy and negotiating efforts

Background

- This presentation gives an account of one section of a 3 year programme of work at a global level
- Global Trade programme in 3 countries: Ghana, Kenya and Uganda
- The broad programme goal is to assist informal workers employed in the informal economy to gain economic self-reliance and increase their participation in advocacy, governance and management
- But first a word on the informal workforce:

Informal Workforce

- Informal workforce = all workers without legal or social protection through their work
- Informal workers = self-employed + wage employed
- Informal self-employed = employers + own account operators + unpaid family workers
- Informal workers = two-thirds or more of all workers in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa

Increasing Market Access & Gender Equality

Increasing Market Access & Gender Equality for Women Informal Self-Employed requires:

- **Supply-side Interventions:** such as micro-finance & business development services
- **Demand-side Interventions:** such as government procurement & investment
- **Institutional Reforms:** to make rules and policies more appropriate for informal workers and to make rule-setting and policy-making processes more inclusive of informal workers

But in order to leverage these interventions and reforms the WIEGO network, which I represent, believes **three enabling conditions** (what we call “**The 3 Vs**”) are needed

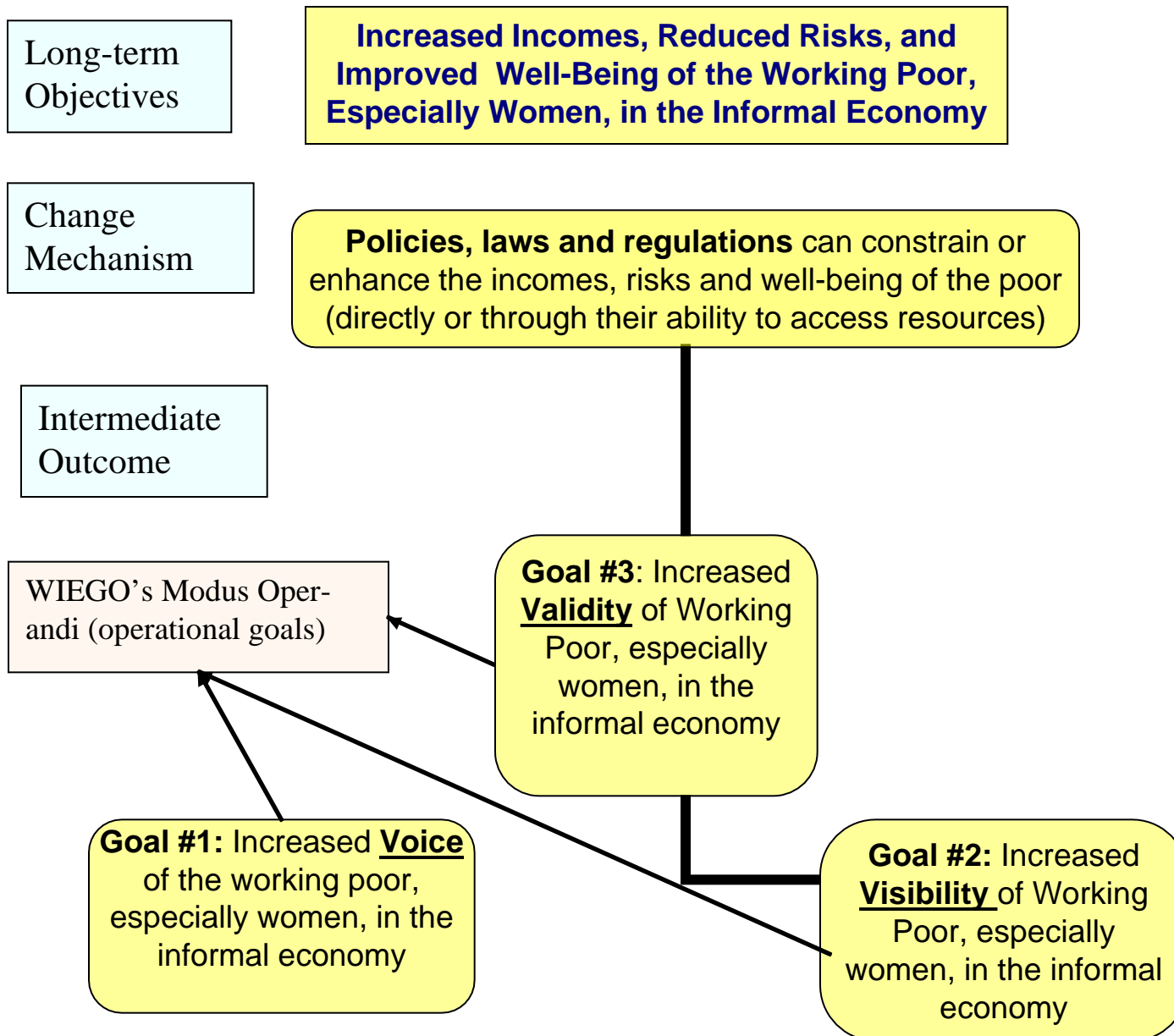


FIGURE I: WIEGO's Approach to Change

WIEGO definition of WEE

- Empowerment refers to the process of change that gives working poor women – as individual workers and as members of worker organisations – the ability to gain access to the resources they need while also gaining the ability to influence the wider policy, regulatory and institutional environment that shapes their livelihoods and lives.

Developing Leadership & Business Skills

- A comprehensive programme of capacity building with cooperatives and self-help groups of producers of commodities and crafts
- The development of a package of training materials
- The design of the materials is aimed to address women's strategic and practical needs

Programme Methodology

- Inspired by WIEGO's Theory of Change and participatory training methodologies
- Works at three levels: country level networks, Fair Trade Organisations and community-based self-help groups and primary cooperative societies
- Outreach through community-based facilitators who are trained as trainers
- The content of the training materials builds on learning from action-research, training needs assessments and a base line survey of the networks

Programme Outcomes

By end 2015

1. 2,800 women cocoa farmers in Ghana & 800 coffee farmers in Uganda will have received leadership training & have increased participation in cooperatives by 30%
2. 25 women's groups in Kenya & Uganda will be formally registered & have improved awareness of land rights, access to government funds & credit facilities
3. 25 women's groups in Kenya and 27 in Uganda will be trained in improved design, quality & production techniques leading to increased sales globally, regionally & domestically (minimum 15% increase)
4. Country level networks in Kenya and Uganda will have increased institutional capacity & ability to service membership evidenced by overall increase in sales by minimum of 10%
5. Package of training/ capacity building resources developed for distribution throughout Fair Trade networks globally

Steps towards formalization

- Facet of the programme is the formal registration of informal self-help groups in the KEFAT (Kenya) and UGAFAT (Uganda) country networks
- By being legally registered, they are able to open bank accounts, access credit and loans and are eligible for government support
- The pre-requisite of having a constitution encourages groups to think about and improve governance and accountability

Transitioning from Informal to Formal Economy

- ILO Recommendation 204 adopted in June 2015
- It recognises that informal workers are not in the informal economy by choice but because of lack of opportunities and that most decent work deficits are in the informal economy
- It applies to all workers and economic units in the informal economy
- The recommendation includes legal recognition and protection for informal workers including the right to collective bargaining and social protection

Women's Economic Empowerment

