

# STREETNET ASSOCIATION

## NO. 3 NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2001

### STREETNET'S PROGRESS TO DATE

#### AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Pat Horn

The StreetNet offices were opened in February 2000, eighteen months ago. We are now half-way through our three-year programme to launch StreetNet as an international organisation of street vendors all over the world. What progress has been made in the first eighteen months?

We have two people working part-time in the StreetNet office since February 2000. Pat Horn is the International Co-ordinator while Nozipho Lembethe is the International Administrator. We have been trying unsuccessfully to find a website manager/researcher to start working with us this year.

#### Regional workshops

The first of our three planned regional workshops was held in Lima, Peru in February 2001. This Latin American regional workshop was hosted by COPEME, a coalition of micro-credit organisations based in Lima. Planning is well under way for the second regional workshop which will be held in Patna, India for the whole Asian region from 26 -28 November 2001. The Asian regional workshop will be hosted by the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). The third regional workshop will be held in Ghana, West Africa, for the whole sub-Saharan African region in March/April 2002. It will be hosted by the Ghana Trades Union Congress (TUC) - most likely in the capital city of Accra.

The aim of the workshops is the following:

1. To share experiences of street vendors in the region and to hear about the experiences of street vendors in other regions.
2. To share experiences about how the problems of street vendors have been overcome through organisation, and information about how other organisations (in other regions) work.
3. To make recommendations from the region about how to structure StreetNet as the international alliance of street vendors.
4. To make plans for building national alliances of street vendors (or any other form of national co-ordination) in Latin American countries between the workshop and the international launch of StreetNet in late 2002.

After these three regional workshops, we will be ready to move forward for the international launch of StreetNet late in 2002. The draft constitution of StreetNet will be prepared from the guidelines put forward by the participants at the regional workshops, and will form the basis of discussions on the constitution to be adopted at the launch.

StreetNet will then register street vendor organisations as members on the basis of this constitution, and launch a 5-year action plan.

#### Field visits

The International Coordinator of StreetNet, Pat Horn, has conducted the following field visits

September 2000 :	Bangkok, Thailand
October 2000:	Kenya and Uganda, East Africa
January 2001:	Kitwe, Zambia
July 2001:	Manila, Philippines and Chiang Mai, Thailand

During these visits, meetings were set up with street vendors and/or street vendors' organisations, to introduce StreetNet to them and interest them in getting involved with StreetNet. As a result of the visit to Kenya, a city alliance of street vendors has already been formed in Nairobi (see story on NAHA in this issue). The visit to Uganda showed that the Uganda Public Employees' Union [affiliated to the National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU)] is now starting to organise street vendors around Uganda into their union through their associations. This will also give them access to collective bargaining with municipalities through the union. In Manila, street vendors' organisations have come together to form joint structures and alliances, such as the Quezon City Alliance of Street Vendors in Manila, and the national alliance of street vendors of the Philippines

#### Publications and website

Colourful StreetNet leaflets have been produced in English, Spanish and French. These have been widely distributed since July 2000. A newsletter has been produced - and this is the third issue. The first issue was only produced in English and Spanish, but the second issue was produced in English, Spanish and French. StreetNet has set up a website at [www.streetnet.org.za](http://www.streetnet.org.za)

This website is still only up in English, but will soon be up in Spanish and French as well.

From now onwards, all StreetNet publications will be in these three languages

The reason for publishing in English, Spanish and French is that they are widely-used international languages. However, we know that many street vendors do not use these languages themselves.



It is hoped that organisations which will be using StreetNet publications in their countries will have them further translated into the local languages spoken by street vendors

**Documentation**

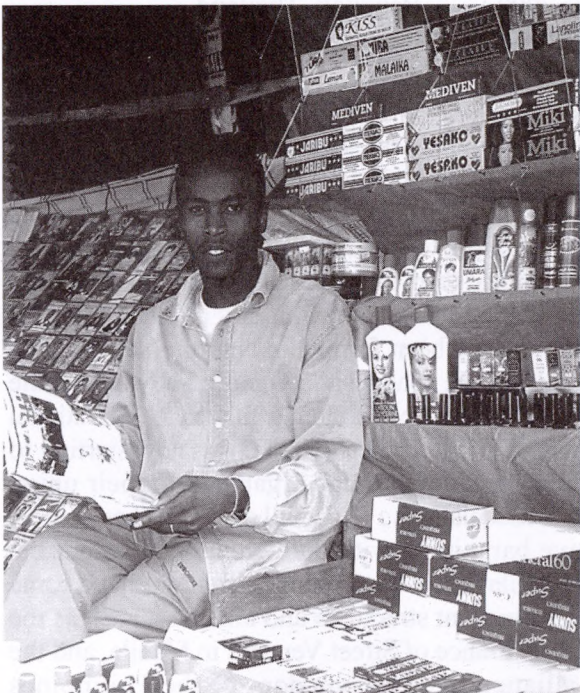
We have started collecting information about all the street vendors' organisations we know about all over the world. We have a questionnaire which we have sent to many organisations for them to fill in all the information about their organisation, and then send it back to us. This information is entered into the data-base on our computer, with information about organising strategies and collective bargaining strategies.

The data-base will soon be connected to the website so that everybody who visits the site will be able to look up the information about street vendors' organisations, and e-mail StreetNet with any additional information which they see is missing.

This part of the work has progressed very slowly, because we have been unable to find a suitable website manager and researcher. However, we have found an enthusiastic volunteer who is available for about 4 months to assist us with our website and documentation, starting in August. So we hope to have a very exciting and up-to-date website and accessible documentation by the end of 2001 !!

**Panel on street vendors**

At the Berlin 21 World Conference on Urban Planning and Policy Development held in July 2001, StreetNet hosted a panel on regulation of street vendors in the two cities of Ahmedabad, India, and Durban, South Africa. We propose to organise a similar panel at the World Congress of Women which will be held in Uganda in July 2002.



**A young man selling cosmetics and other items on the street.**

**Even fish is available on the streets.**



**StreetNet will not be a women's - only organisation. These guys are selling their stuff to a woman.**



## NEWS CLIPS

by Pat Horn

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Carmen Vildoso, who was the local counterpart for the Street Vendors workshop in Latin America and who has been a wonderful contact for the Social Protection Program and for Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) in general in Peru and Latin America, has been appointed Vice Minister at the Ministry of Labour in Peru. There are 2 vice-ministries within the Ministry of Labour: there is one for Labour itself, which looks after labour relations, and there is another called "Promocion Social". This one promotes employment and takes care of social security and social provision. Carmen is vice-Minster of Promocion Social.

Within employment promotion, this division develops programmes to train and employ the youth and to generate income for poor women. It also generates information about the labor market. It has some good programmes sponsored by foreign technical cooperation and by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). She was offered the position by the current Minister of Labour, Fernando Villaran, who is an expert on development of small enterprise in Peru. He worked as a consultant and has done plenty of research on the topic.



**Carmen Vildoso : a woman of integrity.**

Carmen brings a full package of proposals developed in civil society arenas. Until recently, she was President of COPEME (a consortium of Peruvian organisations that support micro-enterprise) and Director of Edaprosopo (an NGO that works on capacity building of street vendors). We, in StreetNet, would like to congratulate Carmen on her appointment, and we hope that this is going to be good news for street vendors and all women working in the informal sector in Peru.

Lucy Lazo, a founder member in the Philippines of HomeNet, which is an international network of home-based workers' organisations and a sister organisation to StreetNet, has been appointed as the Director-General of TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority of the Philippines). She was appointed to this position by the new President of the Philippines, Gloria Arroyo.

Lucy worked in an ILO home workers' project in the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, which completed extensive research into the conditions of home workers in these countries, prior to the adoption of the ILO Convention on Homework in 1996. She also founded PATAMABA, a national organisation of home-based workers in the Philippines, in 1989. She is on the Board of Trustees of HomeNet and has also been assisting in co-ordinating the work of WIEGO in South-East Asia. In her new position, she now has the opportunity to ensure that the technical education and skills development work in TESDA, puts informal sector workers in the mainstream and attends to their needs. TESDA also has a new Women's Centre which can attend to the specific needs of women in the informal sector.

We would also like to congratulate Lucy on her appointment, and she can expect lots of ideas and suggestions from us on education and training programmes for street vendors in the Philippines and maybe, also the rest of South-East Asia !!

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After the Latin American regional workshop which was held in Lima, Peru in February 2001, the organisation Edaprosopo offered to assist StreetNet with the co-ordination of StreetNet's activities in the whole of Latin America including Brazil. The person who is helping us is Raul More, who has already started to contact organisations in the region. He has also produced a short "Electronic Bulletin" in Spanish which he has started circulating.

**Raul can be contacted at Edaprosopo (Equipo de Educacion y Autogestion Social) in Lima, Peru**  
Tel. +51 1 461 6014 / 463 4173  
e-mail address: [postmas@edapr.org.pe](mailto:postmas@edapr.org.pe)

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Pat Horn, international co-ordinator of StreetNet, went on a field trip to Manila, Philippines, and Chiang Mai, Thailand, in July 2001.

In the Philippines, there is a national market and vendors' association. Some of the street vendors' associations in Quezon City, Manila, have also come together in a Quezon City alliance of street vendors. Manila is a large city with a population of over 10 million.



There are many street vendors, who all complain of harassment by city police - even those who have been successful in securing permits to trade in the places where they are working. The law on street trade is very progressive, but the city police are clearly taking on extra-legal powers when "implementing" the street trade laws. The other main complaint of the street vendors is the high interest rates charged by money-lenders. There are extensive micro-credit schemes available for economic activity in the Philippines, but they appear not to be used much by street vendors. The reason given was that the procedures for applying are too cumbersome and time-consuming, and approval of small loans takes too long. Borrowing money from the money-lenders is much simpler, saves time and effort - but then there is the problem of the high repayment rate. Some vendors have to pay licence fees to the municipality as well as rental to the owners of the houses next to which their stalls are situated. From time to time however, they still have to fight against eviction.

In Chiang Mai in the north of Thailand, which is a small city (compared to the capital city of Bangkok) with a population of about 1.5 million, it is clear that street and market vendors are not currently facing major problems.

This was the impression that Pat gained from random interviews with street and market vendors in different parts of the city.

Possible reasons for this could be:

1. there is not much pressure on selling space at the moment;
2. the current governor (mayor) and municipal police are relatively sympathetic to street vendors and their need to earn a living - which was apparently not the case with the previous governor;
3. the disappearance of the Mafia-style organisation which used to frequent streets of Chiang Mai a few years ago.

Although all vendors said that they do not have any organisation, they clearly had some basic and more democratic organic form of organisation and representivity which works well in this context of dealing with a benevolent municipality, but which is not recognised as a formal organisation, and which is clearly distinguished from an organisation with leaders from outside Chiang Mai (like the previous Mafia-style of organisation whose leaders came from Bangkok).



**Women street vendors at a meeting.**



## PREPARATIONS FOR ASIAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP

-----Pat Horn

The second regional workshop of street vendors to be held by StreetNet, will take place from 26-28 November 2001 in Patna, India. It will be convened by the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI). The workshop itself will be for two days, and there will be a one-day policy dialogue between municipal authorities and visiting street vendors' organisations.

India is a large country comprised of many states. Each state in India has its own legislation regulating street vending. Some states have legislation making street vending completely illegal. Others have policies and legislation which recognise street vendors as part of the workers in the informal sector who make a contribution to the economy. They try to support street vending as long as it is well-regulated.

As early as 1982, there was a landmark judgment in a case taken up by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in the High Court of Gujarat which recognised the right of vendors to earn a living in the market of Manek Chowk in central Ahmedabad. On the other hand, in November 1996, the municipality of Calcutta launched the infamous "Operation Sunshine" in terms of which 120 000 street vendors were thrown off the streets, causing much

The National Alliance of Street Vendors in India (NASVI) publication, "Footpath ki Aawaz", has chronicled experiences of street vendors all over India, their struggles for their rights to earn a living and the many legal cases which they and their organisations have been involved in in different cities and states of India. The formation of NASVI made it possible for street vendors to join forces and approach the Indian national government with one common voice, seeking to influence national policy and legislation in India for the benefit of street vendors all over the country. It is therefore fitting for StreetNet to ask NASVI to convene its Asian regional workshop and policy dialogue.

The workshop will be mainly for organised street vendors from different parts of Asia to come together and discuss how best to participate in an international organisation such as StreetNet. Unfortunately, the available budget always limits the numbers that can participate.

It is hoped that there will be about 10 participants from different parts of India, and about 15 participants from different Asian countries. We have contacts in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea and Philippines, who are helping Arbind Singh, the co-ordinator of NASVI, to identify organised street vendors from whom suitable participants can be chosen to attend the workshop. We would welcome information about contacts from other Asian countries who could similarly assist us.



Some members of the National Alliance of Street vendors in India (NASVI). The Asian regional workshop will be hosted by NASVI in Patna, India.



At the workshop, participants will present the situation of street vendors in their city or country, the problems they face, and the ways in which they have organised to overcome their problems. They will also talk about the ways in which they have influenced local or national government policies on the regulation of street vendors, if their organisation has been strong enough. They will also debate how StreetNet should deal with the following issues:

- what kind of constitution StreetNet should have;
- how to ensure that StreetNet represents the poorest survivalist street vendors and not only the higher-income more articulate vendors;
- what policy StreetNet should have about politically affiliated street vendors' organisations.
- what kind of affiliation fees will be appropriate for street vendors' organisations wanting to join StreetNet;
- how to ensure that StreetNet has a high level of women leadership.

StreetNet will not be a women's-only organisation like SEWA in India and the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in South Africa. However, we also do not intend that StreetNet should become a male-dominated organisation like many street vendors' organisations whose leaders are all men even when most of their members are women. This is why we would like to reach some consensus about what provisions we would like to have in the StreetNet constitution to ensure an acceptable level of women's leadership in the elected structures of StreetNet.



**Street vendors in Bangkok, Thailand. The workshop will be attended by organised street vendors from different countries of Asia..**

**Additional information about the workshop arrangements can be requested from Arbind Singh, the national co-ordinator of NASVI, at:  
NIDAN, 3rd floor, Sudama Bhawan, Boring Road, Patna-800 001, Bihar, India  
Tel/fax: +91 612 265705  
e-mail address :nidanpat@hotmail.com**

## **THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC WORKERS ( CGTD) OF COLOMBIA.**

**by Cristobal Camargo- General Secretary - FENALTRAC**

This confederation is formed by groups of first and second grade unions, federations and different sectors. In our case we have the National Federation of Commercial Workers FENALTRAC, that links organizations of hawkers and street vendors, marketplaces, transporters, lottery-ticket sellers and many other different categories of people from the informal economy sector.

We have experience of over 25 years in this sector, giving all types of consultancy and representation in government legislative bodies both at district and national levels.

Members are trained as much in personal as well as institutional aspects. Our challenge is to push for the inclusion of the Associative Work Enterprises in the constitution, this is for the manufacture of articles, for the handling of different products and trading space in market places, to commercialize and to compete.

We have tried to provide social welfare assistance, through organizations in charge of these matters, but the challenge has been difficult and our aim is to claim benefits especially for mothers that support their families, children and young people that each day become part of this sector.

My experience as General Secretary of FENALTRAC has been that of representing FENALTRAC at forums, discussions, workshops, and conferences at national and international level, and as a representative for the CGTD at meetings convened by the ILO concerning the Urban Informal Sector Project (SIU), which we developed over a period of two and a half years.

### **Footnote :**

**\* Some more articles from Colombia and other Latin American countries will be highly appreciated for the Newsletter.**



## THE WORKERS' ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA

by Mike Chungu  
National Co-ordinator  
Workers' Education Association of Zambia

The Workers' Education Association of Zambia (WEAZ), in partnership with the Workers' Education Association (England and Scotland), will hold an informal sector seminar at Andrew's Motel in Lusaka from 17-20 October 2001.

The seminar will draw participation from local informal sector associations, WEAZ, and other partner organisations including the Self-Employed Womens' Union (SEWU) based in Durban, South Africa.

The seminar, which is funded by the National Lotteries Charities Board of the United Kingdom (UK), is a culmination of a local consultation process currently underway. The consultation process involves having meetings and workshops and making observations with informal sector associations, to identify the education needs of workers in the informal sector and those of informal sector organisations.

The local authorities are also involved in the consultation process in order to generate pro-informal sector policies and/or regulations, because currently, most, if not all local authorities, are operating within a legal framework which is terribly anti-informal sector, particularly in relation to street vending.

The trade unions equally, are taking part to identify the potential for organising informal sector workers, as well as the special interests and needs that have to be met for effective representation.

The consultation process cannot claim to be exhaustive, due to time and financial limitations. However, it is already giving the association and local partners a snapshot of the challenges, including education provision and intense

organisation required to build stronger and credible informal sector organisations.

The consultation process has revealed the existence of some informal sector organisations, including one for street vendors locally known as "Tutemba Association" which, in Kalulushi alone (one of the mining districts), has about 500 members.

Yet, little is known about the association. It is not clear whether this due to a lack of publicity skills and knowledge of media relations within the leadership, or simply the result of the consumer press shunning coverage on the association's concerns and interests.

There is deep-rooted prejudice about trade unions eg, when asked about affiliation to the trade union movement, most leaders of informal sector organisation expressed scepticism. Yet the informal sector organisations themselves are playing a trade union role. This reveals, perhaps, the lack of an ideological perspective on their struggle and the need for the informal sector associations to be part and parcel of the broad-based labour movement.

It is not suggested that the informal sector associations should be absorbed by the existing trade unions. However, there is a need for them to have a labour-inclined modus operandi.

The informal sector seminar has an "international" dimension to it: it intends encouraging and enabling interaction of the Zambian informal sector associations with those from other countries e.g SEWU and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) from India. Both these organisation have extensive experience in organising workers in the informal economy.

The seminar will, in a modest way, broaden our local informal sector associations' vision, and get what is "adaptable" in terms of organisational strategies to enhance worker representation in the Zambian informal sector.



Left front : Rose Mwanza (General Secretary of WEAZ) with members of WEA (UK & Scotland) Dave Spooner & Robert Lochrie meeting members of Zambia Marketeers' Association. WEAZ is hosting the workshop in Lusaka.



## **FORMATION OF THE NAIROBI HAWKERS ALLIANCE (NAHA)**

**Pat Horn**

In September 2000, I went to Kenya to meet street vendors' organisations which had been participating in research on women street vendors by Dr Winnie Mitullah from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi, and her research assistant, Anne Kamau. We met street vendor organisations in Nairobi, Kisumu and Machakos. In addition to the many individual street vendor associations that we met, there were two umbrella bodies of street vendors - the Kenya Street Trade Society (KSTS) based in Nairobi, and the Kenya National Hawkers' Union (KENAHU), based in Kisumu.

Both KSTS and KENAHU said that they were organising street vendors in the whole country. However, they were **not** working together, even though their members had very similar problems. Street vendors in Kisumu had noticed that unity for their associations was very important for solving their members' problems together, and for joint negotiations with the municipality; otherwise the municipality would negotiate separately with each association, using them against each other.



**NAHA Committee members :**

**Back : Mrs Loise Ngoru (Chairperson)**  
**Front left : Mr. Charles Maina (Organiser)**  
**Front right : Ms Virginia Kamau (Secretary)**

StreetNet proposed that the different street vendors' associations join hands to form a national alliance of street vendors of Kenya. Most of the associations were very keen to do this. It was agreed that this process would be co-ordinated by Winnie Mitullah and Anne Kamau, who were trusted by all the different organisations. Some of them did not waste any time. By July 2001, street vendors' organisations in Nairobi had formed the Nairobi Hawkers Alliance (NAHA). Their intention is to wait for street vendors' alliances to form in other towns and cities of Kenya and then to join up with them to form a national street vendors' alliance of Kenya.

In Kenya, the former Permanent Secretary for Labour, Mr Gitu, attended a national policy dialogue which was held by Winnie Mitullah and Anne Kamau as part of the research into women street vendors in Kenya. He was very committed to formulating policies to promote the rights of street vendors in Kenya. However, there have been changes in government and Mr Gitu is no longer in that position. It will therefore be important to have a national alliance of street vendors to continue to lobby national and local government for better laws and policies which promote and protect the legal rights and interests of street vendors, irrespective of who is in government positions at any particular time.

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