



NOTHING FOR US WITHOUT US!

What challenges were we experiencing before the Covid-19 pandemic?

- Authorities and others continued to **harass, intimidate, and threaten us** at our workplaces
- We were still struggling to get **access to public space** and infrastructure to run our businesses
- There was still **no social protection** like unemployment pay, maternity pay, sick pay, health protection or a legal framework to protect informal economy workers like us
- We were **battling to be recognised** and there were few regulations that protected us as informal economy workers.

What happened when Covid-19 hit all of us?

Lockdowns and shutdowns meant No work – No income – No food. No trade made it very hard for our members to put food on the table. In some towns where infection rates were high, street vendors were even blamed for the infections.

Inadequate skills to adapt to the sudden crisis. We lacked crucial skills like knowing how to protect ourselves and our customers from the virus, how to move our businesses online and we didn't have the gadgets and knowledge to communicate with each other virtually.

Businesses suffered. Many of us are now earning less than before as the economy has slowed down. Some of us have lost our businesses and have not been able to restart them.

No recognition of informal economy workers, no data on informal economy workers and an absence/lack of inclusive social protection systems. In most countries, governments don't 'see' informal economy workers. They never sit down at the table with them. They only recognize workers who are formally employed and those that pay taxes. So governments measures often never included our members.

Forced to borrow or sell possessions. With no work, we couldn't settle loans or pay rent, school fees, or other bills. Many had to borrow more, loans and interest repayments increased.

Closure of borders stopped cross-border trade. These closures threatened the livelihoods of many who rely on crossing borders to earn an income.

Persistent harassment and violence in some countries because of enforcing Covid regulations. Often the perpetrators were municipal authorities and police. Stress on businesses strained relationships with those who work for others.

Depression, anxiety, more violence at home. To see our families suffering, going hungry made many of us depressed, put a strain on our relationships at home, many women experienced more violence at home at the hands of their partners.

More pressure on women. Many of us women found that we were spending more and more time looking after the home and caring for our family. And when we got back to work, schools were still closed. We struggled with more care work without proper support.

SECURED THE SURVIVAL OF OUR MEMBERS

Delivered food packages, hygiene supplies and PPEs

We mobilized across the world to deliver food packages, hygiene supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPEs). Whether relying on the solidarity of partner trade unions or crowdfunding, we made sure our members knew that no one would be left behind!

Made the plight of street vendors visible

We regularly engaged with the media and decision-makers so that the plight of street vendors could not be ignored. We routinely released press statements about new policies and denounced situations of harassment and violence. We made the plight of street vendors visible.

Became agents of public health

Once markets were slowly allowed to reopen, we became agents of public health. From Sierra Leone to El Salvador, street vendors were active to ensure public markets were safe for all. We delivered training about proper hygiene and sanitation, and even disinfected markets ourselves in many countries.

SUPPORTED SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Not knowing how long the pandemic would last, we also started to consider **alternative activities to generate income.** From investing in cooperatives to even rice-farming projects, we were concerned with self-sufficiency and resilience. Whenever possible, we also financed our members to restart their businesses.

ENSURED WE HAD A SEAT AT THE TABLE

After securing the survival of our members, advocacy became a priority. We needed **new social protection policies that could support street vendors.** From supporting universal basic income policies to promoting access to health care, we were adamant to get a seat at the table. There we set about securing support for street vendors from authorities and others. Many of us secured food parcels, medical care for our members and some even won financial support for informal economy workers.

We urged governments across the world to support informal economy workers at all levels. We wanted them to:

- introduce measures and resources to keep all workers and their incomes safe
- provide universal health care and a basic emergency living cash grant to all informal economy workers regardless of nationality and residency status
- exempt all informal economy workers and the most vulnerable from having to pay water, electricity bills etc. during the Covid-19 crisis.

We shared **Best Practice Briefs and Summarized Guidelines** for street vendor organizations related to advocacy, health, solidarity and social protection.

We provided regular information updates on Covid-19 effects that included responses from affiliates, national governments and other institutions like the ILO, WHO, ITUC and its structures. It shared strategies of experiences of SNI members. [Official statements can be found here.](#) [Developed and shared Podcasts can be tracked here.](#) We also shared motivational messages and were always communicating to support each other.

We launched the **'Two Billion Strong Campaign'** together with our allies/partners in May 2020, demanding:

- **Nothing for us without us** – Covid-19 is an opportunity to change things. Authorities should ensure that informal economy workers are included in decision-making processes that directly affect them
- **Do no harm** – no more harassment, bribery, forced evictions and demolition of workers' assets
- See the transformation – together let's find a **new model of work** that is equitable, redistributive and recognizes and values the contributions of all forms of work.

We provided capacity building training online for affiliates using internal capacity and experts from WIEGO as trainers, from issues related to financial sustainability and important instruments, such as the New Urban Agenda, SDGs and ILO legal instruments.

We built the capacity of StreetNet staff on:

- how to run crowdfunding campaigns and then ran online training for StreetNet affiliates
- social protection, law and informality, new urban policies, informal economy work
- key issues affecting members during Covid-19 crisis.

What did StreetNet International do?

We brainstormed with allies/partners like WIEGO, HomeNet (HNI) (an international organization of home-based workers), the Global Alliance of Waste Pickers (Global Rec) and the International Domestic Work Federation (IDWF) to find solutions that could be used by all informal economy workers.

We provided practical advice to affiliates on how affiliates' members could resume work safely through the Covid-19 pandemic.

We provided communication equipment (computers, smartphones, airtime, internet bundles) and access to internet and online platforms so that meetings could be held virtually to make them safer from Covid-19. All this helped to establish communication infrastructure among the affiliates and improve the tracking of affiliates activities.

We provided regular online updates of the situation of affiliates across the globe so that information could be shared easily. Information included:

- Affiliate membership and gender breakdown
- Details about when members resumed work and difficulties they faced
- Effects lockdown restrictions were having on members.

What do we need to do to get the future we want?

- LOCAL**
 - **Mobilize and organize informal economy workers** to build our collective power; promote unity among informal economy workers, and among traders in particular.
 - **Be visible.** We must show the public and the media who we are and what we do
 - **Participate in public discussions** where we can demand recognition and discuss and review all policies that affect us
 - **Forge economic ties** by creating and supporting cooperatives, self-help groups or any other types of **social solidarity economy**
 - Help members acquire the necessary **technological know-how** to sell online and do contactless money transactions and keep members updated as and when updates happen.
- REGIONAL**
 - **Mobilize and organize and engage within regions and across regions** to share best practices and to learn from one other.
- GLOBAL**
 - **Advocate for recognition and a voice**, for a seat at the table where we can discuss and review all policies that affect us
 - **Prioritise gender-sensitive assessments.** We must plan, implement, monitor and evaluate all our organizations' interventions to make sure they are effective
 - **Liaise with international donors and like-minded organizations** so that they support interventions that get results for our members and informal economy workers generally.

StreetNet is ready to help affiliates!

Submit your project proposals for any of the following activities:

- **Capacity building educational training/workshop/webinar** etc. e.g. training on negotiation skills; re-skilling and re-adjusting to online platforms; how to run crowdfunding campaigns
- **Policy development project** (drafting new policy/amendments to existing legal and social protection, health care at national/local level)
- Establishing cooperative/s as one of the kinds of social solidarity economy
- **Campaign on any relevant advocacy demands** and requirements for a country-specific issue e.g. ILO R202, ILO R204, ILO C190, NUA etc.
- **Investment in organizational capacity**
- **Exposure visit/experience exchange** between the affiliates (if travel is possible)

Set out a clear budget and show how the project will be implemented together with timelines. The amount of provided funds will vary from 1500 to 4500 USD per affiliate country-based project depending on the size of the affiliate. Implementation date: February 2021 – May 2022.

Deadline for proposals for project: 31 October 2021.