

Report of the webinar on Class and Gender for StreetNet leadership and Team Members

31 October - 1 November 2022, 2 sessions per 2 hrs (in Zoom platform)

Aims of the Sessions

1. Short history of the creation of StreetNet, with focus on the constituency and class it was intended for;
2. Familiarise leadership with StreetNet Founding Resolutions with main focus on Class & Gender;
3. Reflect on the meaning/relevance/observance of the Founding Resolutions and the evolution of StreetNet and its constituency;
4. Reflect on the work done by StreetNet leadership in 2009 on class relations among informal traders, and what progress has there been since that time;
5. Reflect on women empowerment at different levels to address persistent gender inequality in StreetNet, and secure organizational sustainability and development;
6. Reflect on what more needs to be done on organizing working poor informal traders and achieving their broader representation;
7. Assessment of StreetNet constituency within its period of 20 years; what we are and what we want to be in StreetNet in 10 years?
8. Consider what advocacy tools and strategies need to be developed on better organizing genuine StreetNet constituency with Leadership commitment.

List of participants:

StreetNet International Council Members:

Lorraine Sibanda, Alberto Santana, Angeliqye Kipulu, Annie Diouf, Jeanette Nyiramassengesho, Jamaladdin Ismayilov, Herminio Guevara Diaz, Kenwilliams Mhango, Maya Gurung, Kadiatou Barry, Anastasie Chodaton, Iryna Yaskevich, Hannah Tarpeh, Aaron Boima

Regional Focal Points Coordinators:

Tamara Bonari, Komi Kessouagni, (Herminio Diaz).

Staff:

Oksana Abboud, Irene Doda, Margarida Texeira, Eleni Rozali, Jane Masta, Evelyn Benjamin Sampson, Kateryna Yarmolouk-Kroek, Maira Vannucchi, Nash Tysmans, Annelene Shahbaz, Suvarna Ragunan.

Facilitator/s:

Pat Horn, Maira Vannuchi

WIEGO representative:

Oksana Abboud, introduces the session, reminding the importance of this topic for StreetNet's constituency to also remind ourselves about StreetNet Founding Policies with particular focus on Class and Gender. It is also relevant for all of us, specifically so close to the StreetNet 20th anniversary and upcoming StreetNet 7th International Congress in May 2023.

Presentation by Pat Horn

StreetNet International was launched in Durban, South Africa, on the 14th November 2002, after three years of preparations starting in January 2000. The preparations included three regional workshops – in Lima, Peru, 2001, for Latin America; in Patna, India, 2002, for Asia; and in Accra, Ghana, 2002, for Africa. Each of these regional workshops was attended by potential member organizations of StreetNet, and care was taken to ensure a majority of female participants in each, in recognition of the fact that the majority of street vendors and informal traders worldwide are women. There were three key questions which needed to be explored and debated in each region, in order to determine how the new organization should be structured and regulated.

Question 1 – How to secure and maintain strong women leadership?

The trade union movement of workers in the formal economy provided a living example of how NOT to do things in this regard. With the exception of specifically all-women unions, including the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, trade unions were better-known for failing to live up to even relatively tame gender equality policies, and for sustaining robust levels of patriarchal domination – even in unions whose women members are in the majority. Quotas for women's participation as a mechanism to address this were not popular in the trade union movement. But at the same time, there was a dearth of alternative strategies actually making a difference. So the initiative for the establishment of StreetNet International sought to establish a new precedent.

As a start, the convening of regional workshops with a majority (or even equal number) of women participants established a level playing field for the emergence of a good decision in this regard. Robust debates took place in each of these regional workshops – and in each, independently, the consensus reached was for a 50% quota for the MINIMUM threshold of women's participation at all levels of the organisation (which is different from 50-50 participation by women and men) to be made constitutionally obligatory.

The StreetNet International Constitution was accordingly drafted with the 50% quota principle embedded in many different clauses of the constitution, to ensure very thorough implementation.

Question 2 – How to deal with political parties?

The phenomenon of politicians using street vendors as voting fodder every time elections are approaching, is one of the oldest stories there is. Long-established organisations have many anecdotes about this, while some of the newer organisations still get excited when approached by politicians offering to help or "partner" with them. This means that any organisation of street vendors and informal traders needs to have a very clear political policy, adopted democratically and then diligently and uniformly

implemented. This is particularly important for empowering the organisation and its members against the use of divide-and-rule strategies against them which are so popular with politicians and authorities. When this theme was debated in three different regions of the world with three different kinds of political cultures, again the outcome in each regional workshop was very similar. In each case it was agreed that while every organisation affiliated to StreetNet International would be relatively autonomous, the author of their own organisational constitution and policies, including their political policy – StreetNet International should maintain party-political neutrality and would not be free to engage in any party-political affiliation or relationship, even (and especially) with a political party linked to one of its affiliate organisations.

This meant that StreetNet's future engagement with political parties for the purpose of advocacy and influencing laws and policies would have to be done without entering into any institutional relationship with such political parties, maintaining very clear partisan boundaries.

Question 3 – What should be the role of NGOs?

To the average lay person, this may seem like a non-issue. There are many NGOs who offer services and technical support to street vendors and informal traders. This of course is a good thing. But what is not such a good thing is when the representatives of these NGOs start to compete with street vendors and informal traders for leadership positions in a democratic membership-based organisation. In the short-term, if NGO representatives, with their superior technical expertise, were to be free to compete with ordinary street vendors and informal traders for election as leaders, the likelihood of succeeding in building strong working class leadership in the sector becomes very slim. But the need of marginalised constituencies for such expertise, as well as the financial resources which often accompany it, gives rise to the temptation to succumb to some level of dependence (at best) or even patronage (worse) which sometimes sees NGOs affiliate to grassroots organisations and end up running them. So there was an extremely robust discussion on this issue in each of the regional workshops. In the end, each of them drew the same conclusion, that StreetNet International should partner with NGOs, especially service organisations, but NOT accept them as affiliates. Accordingly, the constitution was drafted to accept only membership-based organisations of street vendors and informal traders as direct affiliates with rights to nominate their members for election to the top leadership positions.

Worker leadership is not built overnight, and most organisations take a few years to build up strong worker leadership. StreetNet International was being established as an organisation of workers in the informal economy, according to the principle of democratic worker control. This meant that the leadership which developed was being deliberately shaped to by workers from this sector of the informal economy – and ensuring that at least 50% of them would be women leaders from the sector.

Observations: StreetNet succeeded in developing an impressive level of women's leadership during the first 10 years of its existence, due to very strict implementation of the women's quota provision in the Constitution – although it took 14 years, and many bitter struggles, before the first woman President was elected in 2016.

However, the working class commitment to “building strong leadership among the poorest and most disadvantaged vendors” was weakly implemented during leadership elections. This was studied and

analyzed in a StreetNet International workshop on Employment Relationships among Informal Traders, held in Durban, South Africa, on 18 – 20 May 2009.

Questions and answers

Pat invites the audience to reflect on an aspect: many leaders come from the upper class. Are we doing enough to promote the poorest class?

What role / relevance are we giving to the StreetNet Founding Resolutions?

Angelique Kipulu (LDFC – DRC)

She started off as a simple delegate and raised at the top of the organization. She recognises that the trade unions are often led by men. Leaders should be from the grassroots movements. The majority, at that level, are women. We need to build their capacity, promoting awareness on class and gender further.

Lorraine Sibanda (ZCIEA – Zimbabwe)

Thanks Pat for bringing attention to this topic. So far, SNI is on track and I think this workshop will enlighten us further and help strengthen our principles.

Nash Tysmans (SNI Regional Organizer)

I appreciate that we have this direction in StreetNet (through the founding policies) but I also see now how difficult it is to realize in practice, especially considering the different contexts of our affiliates. We have gained a lot in 20 years but now that I've visited two of our affiliates in Asia, I see some of the same challenges you outlined in the 2009 workshop in Durban and I'm curious to know what our leaders think of this. I just appreciate that we are having this discussion because it also clarifies the work we have to do as organisers working with our affiliates.

Pat Horn

It is true that in the first 10 years we have achieved a lot in terms of women's leadership. But we can easily go backwards. We are still in a patriarchal society and we need to sustain the effort.

Annie Diouf (CNTS – Senegal)

We have been able to promote the leadership of women even within the central trade union.

Jamalladin Ismayilov (Khidmat-ISH – Azerbaijan)

We have to train women for leadership and do everything we can to promote their leadership and empower them. We need to introduce women representatives at every level of our organizations.

Kadiatou Barry (CNTG – Guinea)

Women hold some posts, but they are not always at the top. We need to increase the number of women at the top.

Pat Horn

During the early years, we noticed that many organizations felt a sort of pressure from the others to put women at the top. This helped.

Questions for the group

1. Reflect on the work done by StreetNet leadership in 2009 on class relations among informal traders, and what progress has there been since that time;
2. Reflect on women empowerment at different levels to address persistent gender inequality in StreetNet, and secure organizational sustainability and development;
3. Reflect on what more needs to be done on organizing working poor informal traders and achieving their broader representation.

Group discussion. The groups were divided according to languages

Spanish group

Herminio Diaz (Festives - El Salvador): Many women have no desire to participate in leadership positions. They often have to perform household duties and take care of the children. We have attempted to incentivize, to increase their participation. We see many people want to get only the benefits and not get the workload.

Vendors do not consider themselves workers. They see themselves as salespeople, not workers. As a sector we need a strong campaign that creates awareness that they are workers. They need to claim their rights as workers. They will then accept the responsibility.

We are completely in agreement with the 50 percent quota. That means equality. We do not agree about more. It will not be equal. If we increase the quota, there will not be enough women in the organizations to fulfill this quota.

Russian speaking group

Irina Yaskevich VMESTE – Belarus): women have a big responsibility - they are often care workers. Women leadership means also providing care facilities and child care services. Sometimes, women do not wish to be in leadership positions because of men's attitude belittling them.

Women work more than 40 hours a week. Women leaders are needed to understand women's issues and present them directly with negotiation counterparts. Women are strong enough to be good leaders.

English speaking group

Lorraine Sibanda (ZCIEA – Zimbabwe): since 2009, significant progress has been made. SNI has promoted the engagement with local authorities, there has been organizing trainings for negotiations skills, and has fought for the allocation of market space and better working conditions. It has also advocated for the ratification and implementation of the ILO Convention 190.

The issue now is to advocate for women beyond numbers. Strengthen their voice and give them confidence, that is what we have to work for.

French speaking group

Angelique Kipulu (LDFC – DRC): We have more women leaders than men. We need to organise better to make women more proactive. The goal is their autonomisation, making them independent from others. Women often organise cooperatives and activities to generate income for themselves. We need to advocate for help from the institutions to facilitate these initiatives.

Conclusive remarks

Pat thanked everyone for a very active participation and a progressive discussion of the SNI Leadership on the core issues of StreetNet and its main constituency.

She also invited the participants to read the Workshop report from 2009 and to look through the StreetNet Constitution again.

The first day session ended with a high tone and understanding on the need to empower more women and to develop more activities just for women to build their capacity and confidence to be able to stand for the leadership positions in their organizations and to enable them in negotiations with governments to speak up on their concerns.

SECOND DAY SESSION

Maira Vannuchi's intervention

We know that class and gender are fundamental to StreetNet, part of its guiding principles, but why don't we delve a little deeper into these two concepts?

Social class

What is social class?

It is a group of people, who are similar based on some criteria, especially economic ones.

In capitalism, social classes are distinguished from one another based on purchasing power, income, social position, level of education, standard of living, access and quality of basic services such as education, health, mobility, culture, housing, social guarantees, sports that guarantee full human development.

The ruling class (with greater purchasing power, the rich) is the one that directly or indirectly controls the State and the means of production. They concentrate wealth, privileges and hold power so that the structure of society continues to be maintained that way.

The working class, on the other hand, brings together groups of more impoverished people, whose labor force is exploited by the ruling class. In capitalism, the working class has its own workforce as its most

valuable resource. The sale of your work time, your energy, in exchange for a salary. The ruling class needs this workforce to operate the means of production and generate wealth.

The working class produces wealth with its own hands, but receives only a salary that guarantees the minimum to survive, while the ruling class concentrates all the profit and surplus. This inequality makes up the gears of the capitalist economy.

Regardless of the fact that society is not structured only with worker-boss relations, the logic that the working class needs to be kept poor, and to work every day, all their time and energy to turn the engine for generating wealth in the countries, receiving in exchange only the minimum to survive, reigns throughout the world. That's how the capitalist system works.

What is class consciousness?

Jamalladin Ismayilov: Karl Marx. social layers: upper and lower class. Social differentiation. 200 years discussion. We all went through these definitions and understand your point.

Maira: When you recognize which group in society you belong to and identify with it, and start to act in defense of the interests of your social class.

What are the interests of the working class?

In addition to the right to work, it is in the interests of workers to have dignity assured in their lives, as in any human being. That your work ensures you, as well as your family, a dignified and protected existence, that is: decent work (healthy working conditions, free from violence) and social protection (being able to get sick and give birth without going hungry; being able to retire when old, remuneration that is sufficient to survive in good conditions, being able to organize, having the opportunity to develop, having racial and gender equality, etc.).

Do we always act in defense of our own class?

It would be natural to. We act in defense of our family, our community, of what matters to the well-being of our lives. However, there are traps. 100 years ago, there was no labor law, power holders forbade unions to exist to ensure there was no contestation. Today, after much struggle, we have the right to free association, negotiation (at least most workers, but unfortunately not all). So the mechanisms of control of the force of the united workers are sophisticated, and they go through illusions that are sold in a tricky way so that things remain as they always were and don't change.

The important the trap is this, it is said that: "If I do everything the rich class does, I will be rich too. If I focus on my development, if I work hard, I will be able to move up the social class." An individualistic view. It is illusory, because there is a structure that works so that the poorest continue to be poor, to continue generating the world's wealth in exchange for the bare minimum to survive. And that the richest continue to be the richest, few, concentrating wealth and power. To challenge this structure, there is only one way: collective force.

Entrepreneurship, having a good idea, employing efforts, investing resources, having faith, building a business that generates income from work is a virtue of the working people, who create, risk and sweat to get their daily bread. **But beware, we cannot think that we are entrepreneurs before we consider**

ourselves workers. Because, despite not having bosses, we are part of the working class, we are not business executives, belonging to the ruling class. And the idea of entrepreneurship was appropriated by capitalist thinking to feed individualism and the illusion that it is possible for everyone to overcome poverty individually. And it's not. We need to recognize ourselves as workers, many of them join hands, arms, build strength and collective solutions to be able to face the unequal system that operates our society. Therefore, workers of the world, unite!

The self-employed manifesto written in 2011 in Nicaragua, which brought together thinkers to reflect on the self-employed, states that economic exploitation takes place not only on the factory floor or in the immediate process of production, but rather finds expression in each and every mercantile exchange. In capitalism, not only a minority made up mainly of industrial workers is exploited, but rather the billions who are condemned to subordinate their labour to the hegemony of the capitalist market. They propose to call the entire conglomerate of workers out of the formal employment the self-employed proletariat, insofar as they are being impoverished and pauperized by capital while contributing in one way or another to the generation of wealth and surplus value with the toil of their bodies.

The current capitalist system is one that generates more unemployment with each passing day, forcing workers to find their own means of survival, to the point that today most workers in the so-called Third World who survive by their own effort are self-employed, while the traditional working class is shrinking. This process is converting self-employed workers into the largest social class worldwide.

Workers who do not receive a set wage, such as the street vendors, are sometimes referred to as “small entrepreneurs”, in an effort to distance them from the world of work. But as long as we generate wealth and surpluses which are seized by capital through the capitalist market, their condition is exactly that of a worker exploited by capital, that is to say, they are proletarians – albeit not salaried workers.

Another important issue is about the role and the responsibility of the State. When labor law was created, after a lot of struggle, it was established that the State should watch over and guarantee that workers had, through the law, the right to dignity guaranteed (to retire, to be able to get sick without going hungry, to be able to have children, decent labor conditions etc.). It could be either ensuring that companies that profit from the efforts of workers are responsible for this cost, whether through social rights, the working force that moves countries' economies needs to have their human dignity guaranteed by the state. And that's what we talk about when we train and encourage our affiliates to push for negotiations, because we are talking about guaranteeing rights that are ours.

What is gender? Observation from the audience

Jamalladin Ismayilov: In capitalist society, the informal sector constitutes the majority of workers. Yet, we are still in a male-dominated society.

Suvarna Ragunan (in chat): gender is a system, when men hold power and women are oppressed.

Maira Vannuchi:

Social structure in which men have dominance power in various branches of society. In a patriarchal culture, the man assumes political, economic, moral and religious responsibility and authority over the women and children entrusted to his protection.

In the capitalist system, patriarchal culture is part of the system of domination, which in addition to the domination by the ruling class, society is dominated by men, so that the female figure is devalued and oppressed in various dimensions of society.

The division of labor by gender has existed in many societies for many, many years. Men and women took care of different parts of the production and reproduction of life, but there was, in a way, a balance, an equal importance and appreciation of the work done by each one.

Patriarchy is when this balance no longer exists and there is a dominance of one gender by the other, where men are the only ones who can decide, rule, work outside the home, define family rules, move freely, and women are kept indoors, as people subordinate to men, restricted from social life, political life, the economy, decisions. And still many times being victims of violence by men. And all this being seen from the point of view of the law as legal, since the men who make and determine the policy.

Patriarchy is a society in which the value of men is considered greater than that of women. And the struggle for a fair and egalitarian society involves facing this unequal structure that makes up our society. And because for so many years it has been this way, it is very common for women to have less space and conditions for their existence, and this includes their political action in representative organizations. In the world, men dominate most spaces where decisions are made. They have always been in the public space acting and that is why they are the majority. Therefore, in order to have an egalitarian society, an egalitarian organization that defends and reinforces the value and importance of women in participating in spaces for reflection, construction and decision, rules are needed to guarantee their participation. **And it is the role of men to provide this space for women to occupy these places that are rightfully theirs, women are half of the world's population and therefore they also need to be in the decision-making chairs of half of the organizations, congresses, schools, universities etc.**

However, often because they do not have a favorable environment for their development, few opportunities, families that restrict freedom, or even the volume of domestic work (cooking, cleaning, tidying, taking care of children, the elderly) that is still very little divided between men and women, women give up their space, and that is why we need to work on female empowerment, so that women have support and encouragement to take their place in organizations. Knowing that they can, are capable and very necessary to take care of the world, participating in organizations, governments, exercising the most diverse professions. That's why we work hard on the empowerment of women, because it is necessary to strengthen those who have been oppressed and impeded for hundreds of years.

Discussion of the gender issue in society:

Nash Tysmans (in chat)

It's not natural but the constructed set of roles assigned to men and women.

Eleni Rozali (in chat)

a system of society or government in which the father or eldest male is head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line.

Sofia Trevino (in chat)

As I was reading the material, I couldn't stop thinking that we are missing a wider conversation on oppression. Class -of course- is a system of oppression, but also racism, sexism, heterosexism, imperialism.

The oppression street vendors face and fight against is at different levels as well (institutional, interpersonal or internalized), and I wonder if the strategy is looking at addressing oppression beyond class and gender and at the different levels

Kateryna Yarmolyuk-Kroeck (in chat)

I also support the view that gender is socially constructed and over time it can change.

Irina Yaskevich

Often women do have the possibility to think about themselves as leaders, starting from childhood.

Margarida Teixeira (in chat)

Another aspect that complicates the discussion is that class is socially constructed, but sex isn't, and it can be difficult for people to distinguish between sex and the gender stereotypes that are associated with it. that is what makes so many people think gender oppression is "natural", even when they concede other forms of oppression are human-made.

Angelique Kipulu

Gender is an ideological construct. Sometime we talk about the weaker sex. Opportunities are denied on the basis of this idea.

Jeanette Nyiramasengesho

In some countries, gender equality is just rhetoric. We need to change the mindset.

Maya Gurung

Lack of opportunities starts from the home. There are differences between boys and girls in the education process. This translates into wage disparity and lack of representation at policy level.

Jamalladin Ismayilov Sometimes, men and women refer back to traditional stereotypes. In many countries, the man is the breadwinner. But women also have serious responsibilities, and they should be supported.

Jeanette Nyiramasengesho

Sometimes this issue is not understood well among informal economy workers. Talking about gender issues can cause disruption in families.

Suvarna Ragunan (in chat)

I agree with you Maya Gurung. . . this change of thinking needs to start from home! it's in the way we are brought up and what values we are taught.

Komi Kessouagni

The gender issue on equality between men and women is a way to give value to the women and value the humanity.

Pat resumes the session:

- The main issue is the combination of class and gender
- In a capitalist society, we develop a gender division of labor
- We fight not to be constrained into gender and labor stereotypes
- By our founding resolutions, we are committed to focus on the poorest of the poor. We have tools, such as the founding resolution, which can be used for this purpose.

How can these tools be used effectively?

Pat asked the participants which are the parts of the StreetNet Constitution that mention class and gender?

Jamalladin Ismayilov

The SNI constitution is very well used at the organizational level, but less at the regional level. Maybe the regional focal points can take the lead to improve this aspect.

The participants highlighted the following points of the SNI Constitution:

3.2 to build and strengthen the capacity and leadership of women market vendors, street vendors and mobile hawkers at all levels of organization;

3.3 to build an information base on the numbers and situation of market vendors, street vendors and mobile hawkers in different parts of the world, disaggregated by gender;

3.5 in recognition of the class differences which exist between market vendors, street vendors and mobile hawkers, StreetNet should prioritise the upliftment of the poorest market vendors, street vendors and mobile hawkers;

3.8 to promote correctional policies aimed at rectifying the environment that denies equality of opportunity to market vendors, street vendors and mobile hawkers and wastes their productive potential;

3.9 to encourage young street vendors, informal market vendors and hawkers between the ages of 18 and 35, especially young women, to participate actively in activities and leadership at all levels of the organization;

5.2 The number of votes of a member organisation will be determined by the principle of proportional representation, based on the number of paid-up market vendor, street vendor and/or hawker members belonging to the organization or its affiliates (paid-up according to the practices and policies of the respective organizations).

8. StreetNet consists of the following structures:

International Congress: meets at least once every four years, consisting of representation by delegates from International Council and all member organisations, based on membership size.

International Council: meets annually, consisting of representation by eleven (11) elected members in addition to the International President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer, of whom at least (50%) must be women.

Executive Committee: a sub-committee of the International Council consisting of seven, which meets quarterly.

Regional Structures: in each region established by StreetNet, autonomous structures coordinated by Regional Focal Point organisations appointed by the International Congress or the International Council.

The organization shall:

exist in its own right, separately from its members;

be able to own property and other possessions;

be able to sue and be sued in its own name.

9.1 Composition

9.3 Quorum

9.4.2 Two or more of the four International office-bearers elected must be women.

10.1 Composition of the international council

10.8.1 The Youth Committee is a sub-committee which reports to the StreetNet International Council and the Executive Committee, composed of two members from each StreetNet Region (one woman and one man) to be elected by the young members between the ages of 18 and 35 years in each region for a term of no longer than three years.

How can we use the conclusions from the 2009 report better than we have done so far?

Jamalladin Ismayilov

I suggest to draft an appreciation letter for the women working in various regions from the SNI leadership.

Irina Yaskevich

I suggest we create some formal paper for the international organization to give to authorities when affiliates go to negotiate.

Pat Horn

Irina and Jamalladin raise the issue of external recognition. There is another level of recognition, internal to our organization. Why do we keep electing people in the higher class?

Leaders can train other people from lower class. It's important to keep being conscious about this issue. Responding to Herminio, I also say that the 50/50 is already our policy and that changing it would require a change to the Constitution.

In the countries where we are present, the majority of street vendors are women. Quotas are normally created according to statistics.

I hope there will be more discussion on the division of labor.

Advocacy / media tools and strategies: suggestions

Jamalladin: The leadership can send official letters to governments, signing it on behalf of the organisation.

Herminio Diaz

In El Salvador we have no freedom of expression or association. We need to show that we are part of an international organization. 21 members are detained.

Alberto Santana

Sometimes women have specific constraints. I suggest we organize trainings for men, in order to help them recognising the value of women in leadership positions.

Irina Yaskevich

We need protection plans for women who want to be leaders.

Jane Masta (in chat)

Some venues and timing also hinder women's participation, plus some cultural elements.

Pat Horn

Some constraints are cultural and specific to countries. We need to plan advocacy strategies around countries and regions, too.

Kateryna Yarmolyuk-Kroeck

Advocacy should start from the grassroots level. There is no targeted priority at the local level. We rely on RFPs to know the situation on the ground.

Nash Tysmans (in chat)

This conversation also refers to how we organise right? How we choose who will participate, who gets to speak, what topics to focus on etc? I think we need to have these difficult conversations with our affiliates on class and gender. Maybe even pick up on the work done in 2009 and ask if those issues are still relevant to our members.

Media is important but also education and constant reflection. I think we become used to working a certain way but we need to evaluate/assess where we are too.

Irene Doda (in chat)

My reflection on the media side of the discussion: I think we can highlight and communicate more on specific constraints faced by women and try to portrait the diversity of different conditions, class and cultures. Following also in our communication the "unity in diversity" principle.

Pat Horn

The staff will come up with a follow up plan on media and advocacy strategy.

Pat also thanked everyone for a very active and deep discussion and noted on a strong current leadership of StreetNet who understands the class and gender issue as well as has a good intention to promote women empowerment further and at all organizational levels.

Oksana Abboud and Pat Horn closed the session.

Oksana thanked Pat and Maira for their great facilitation of the two sessions and highlighted that this discussion needs to be continued and even replicated at regional and national affiliates level for better understanding and strengthening advocacy capacity of our members.