



STREETNET INTERNATIONAL

2023 GLOBAL REPORT



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I. Foreword by Oksana Abboud International Coordinator

Welcome to the second edition of the StreetNet Annual Global Report! We are happy to issue the second edition of the StreetNet Global Report to share with all of you some more insight, information and important activities we did within 2023 in StreetNet at different levels, amplifying our collective voice and power, gradually moving towards big social change!

2023 was an exceptionally significant year for StreetNet, a year which has already become a part of our institutional history and a great story of triumph that we wrote together with our members and supporters!

We have conducted a successful 7th StreetNet International Congress in May 2023 which was a very remarkable and essential milestone for the organization to maintain our democratic functioning as global alliance of street and market vendors - essential workers for all economies globally.

Oksana Abboud speaking at the event "Worker organizing and the civic space: what have we learned from global experience" organized by Ford Foundation in New York City, June 2023.

We have proudly harvested great outcomes of the 7th Congress, during which 4 working Parallel Commissions have been created to provide an international workers-led space to discuss challenging issues and concerns for our constituency and to find possible solutions and generate new adaptive strategies towards very unstable global arrangements. The Congress also developed and adopted 5 progressive Resolutions that will guide and lead our alliance to address the current global set-up and tailor coping mechanisms to advance our goals.

The election of a strong StreetNet International Council representing workers leaders from 15 countries, was an essential part of the ordinary Congress process.

All this demonstrates the growing capacity and maturity of our Affiliates and StreetNet as a global labour movement institution with its progressive strategy and vision.

We are also gradually extending different areas of StreetNet workers' education programs and continue strengthening all our Affiliates magnifying their voice, negotiation skills and advocacy campaigns at different operational levels: from adopting the strategies within current realities to better respond to the members' needs, to identifying priority areas and common grounds among all labour movement organizations, promoting international solidarity and unity among ALL WORKERS!

All StreetNet activities contained a very valuable educational momentum, starting from direct capacity building of our ordinary members, contributing to strengthening their recognition, visibility, representation and legitimacy for influencing the policy affecting their lives and livelihood, to promoting democracy and its values from the very grassroots level to the international agenda discussion forums.





Our Affiliates' advocacy strategies at national, regional and international levels brought us to the united voice and cooperation with trade unions on the ratification and implementation of the ILO Convention 190 along with the promotion of formalization of the informal economy, including through social protection extension and the right to the collective bargaining.

We also joined efforts with trade unions during the ILO Conference, while discussing Labour Protection and Just Transition, bringing the informal economy workers' perspective. It was a very solid platform for planting the seeds of joint collective actions and demands for the workers' rights recognition and respect.

Parallel to the activities on the ground, we collected important data about street vendors' status, identity and daily struggles to depict a street vendor's profile as an essential worker, who has to be recognized, respected and provided with decent working conditions but who are still facing daily violence and harassment from public authorities and law enforcement agents.

Within 2023 Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) was one of the biggest focus area for StreetNet. Cooperatives and other SSE units can provide a pathway to formalization for all informal economy workers and help the members and their organizations to sustain, providing basic social protection and access to work. We strongly believe that it's an 'alternative approach to business' whose main goal is not only financial returns but also social benefits for their members and wider communities.

Investment in organizing activities at the national level brought measurable fruits. Within 2023 we could observe an essential increase in membership, which is the highest recorded of the whole StreetNet history, reaching 753 757 members globally.

We are grateful to all our funders, partners and allies, like WIEGO, who are staying committed to us for the prosperity of advancing our members' rights and together we are making this world a better place.

We remain moved by StreetNet core values, promoting international solidarity and unity, social justice, peace, equality and integrity, ensuring commitment to our main motto -

Nothing for Us without Us!

Oksana Abboud, StreetNet International Coordinator

2. About our global alliance

We are a global alliance of organizations of informal traders, such as street vendors, market vendors, cross-border traders and other self-employed informal economy workers. Our affiliates are trade unions, associations, cooperatives and other forms of democratic and worker-led membership-based organizations.

We were created in Durban, South Africa, in 2002. We have now been active for more than twenty years and have grown our membership to more than 50 organizations present in 4 continents and representing over 700,000 informal traders.

Our vision is a strong, self-reliant, democratic, and members' driven organization of informal traders and street vendors capable of improving the lives of the working poor engaged in the informal economy.



StreetNet foundation in Durban, South Africa, 2002. Photo by Marty Chen.

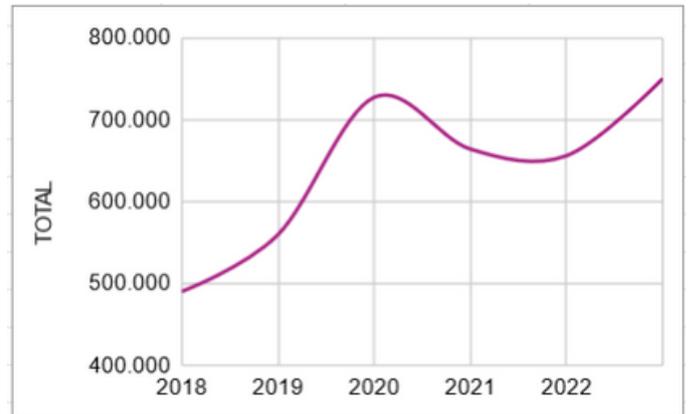
3. Get to know our members

Where are our members based?

In 2023, StreetNet had 753.757 members, from 56 organizations in 52 countries. Our membership has been growing steadily for the past 5 years.



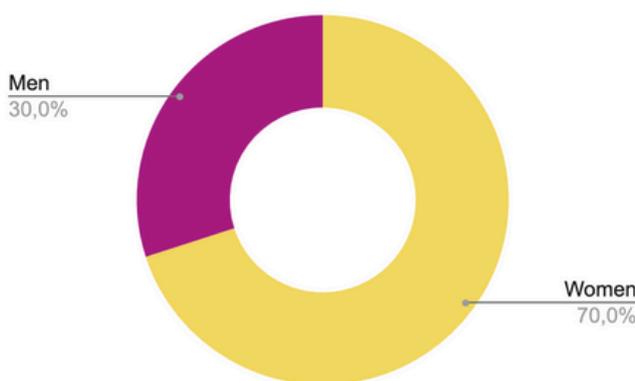
StreetNet membership in 2023



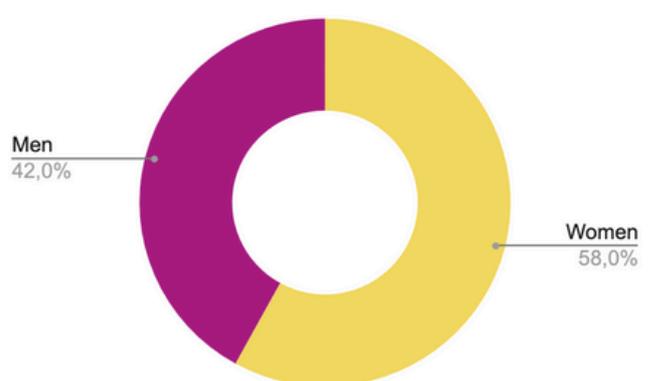
Historical growth of membership

How many women make up our members?

Women make up the majority of StreetNet International. They constitute 70% of the total membership. The share of women in leadership positions is not proportional to their numbers in the membership, although we remain largely women-led: 58% of our affiliates have women leaders.



Membership composition by gender



Leadership composition by gender



Meeting with women street vendors in Burkina Faso, members of our affiliate SYNAFVL, during a field visit in July 2023.

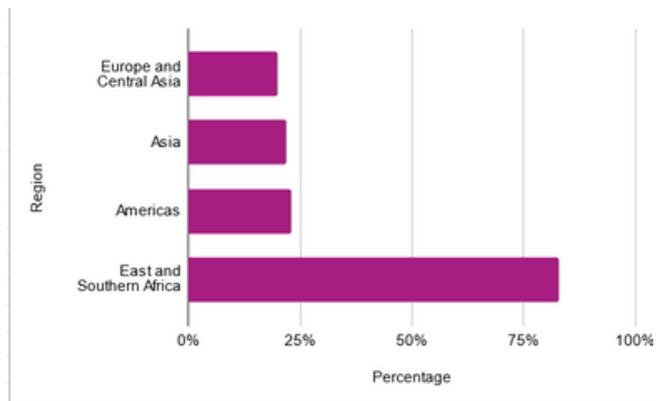
How many young people do we have?

In 2023, nearly **22% of StreetNet membership was constituted by the youth**. The largest number of young people was reported in East and Southern Africa (46%) and the smallest in West and Central Africa region (14%). The other three regions varied between 20% and 30% of young membership.

Some of our affiliates also have structures established to represent youth in their organization. This is a very interesting trend that shows how the presence of young people is strategic for growth and sustainability. **It is notable that in East and Southern Africa, 83% of organizations have a youth structure or committee.**



Membership composition by youth



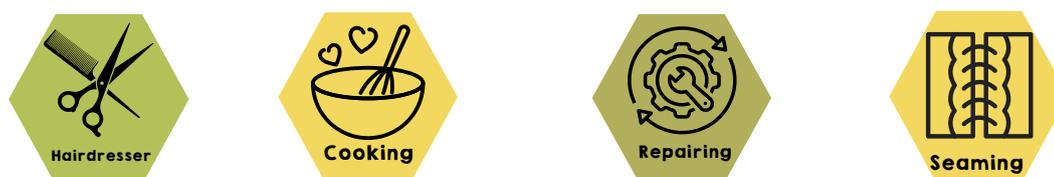
Percentage of organizations that have a youth structure in place

What do our members sell?

The goods sold by our members are quite varied: the majority sells both food and beverages (cooked meals and snacks, raw fruits and vegetables; grocery items; meats and poultry; fish; drink, juices and water) and/or **merchandise** (second-hand clothes and shoes; kitchen and house utilities; electronics and gadgets, animals).



Street vendors and other informal traders do not just sell goods, however. Many work in the streets offering services. **Our members reported offering mostly cooking and repair services, followed by hairdressing and seaming.**



How many of our members are migrants and vulnerable populations?

Our affiliates reported on the presence of specific vulnerable populations among their members, namely refugees, migrant workers and people with disabilities. **The most significant trend is that these groups tend to represent 10% to 40% of the total membership of our affiliate organizations.** But there are big regional variations. For example, the Street Vendors Project in the United States reports **having 95% of migrant workers** among their membership. In Europe, FTUEU, our affiliate in Ukraine, **had 59% of their members who became refugees** after the Russian invasion in 2022.

Informal-cross border trade is a prominent phenomenon in Africa, both in the **West and Central and in the East and Southern regions: all affiliates have reported 30% or more of cross-border traders among their membership.** A notable case in the continent is ASSOVACO, one of StreetNet's three affiliate organizations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has 84% of members who are cross border traders.

What global trends are affecting street vendors worldwide?



Lack of social protection



Street vendors meeting at the IDEA offices in Cambodia, 2023. (Photo by IDEA)

The obstacle that most organizations face is the **lack of access to social protection: maternity and paternity benefits, unemployment coverage, pensions, medical insurance are not available to street vendors in the majority of the countries where our affiliates are present.** This is tied to the lack of instruments for a just and equitable formalization process. The lack of access to social protection schemes seriously threatens the livelihood of vulnerable members and the sustainability of their work over the long term.



Most of our organizations (80% of respondents) focus their advocacy strategies on extending social protection schemes to informal economy workers.

ADVOCATING FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION SCHEMES in Cambodia

IDEA, our affiliate in Cambodia, has collaborated with OXFAM, GRET and API on the demand of the informal economy sector to obtain NSSF (National Social Security Fund) registration. Informal economy workers or self-employed workers are registered through the health care system. 3000 IDEA members (490 women), voluntarily pay a monthly contribution of 15600 Riels (around 4 USD) from the 1st April 2023.

In November 2022, IDEA disseminated a report on the possibility of paying contribution fees to the NSSF to their members and organized meetings and training on social protection, and campaigned for a social security protection registration for self-employed and informal economy workers via social media, direct engagement with relevant institutions and through social dialogues in various forums. (IDEA, Cambodia)



Violence and eviction from the workplace

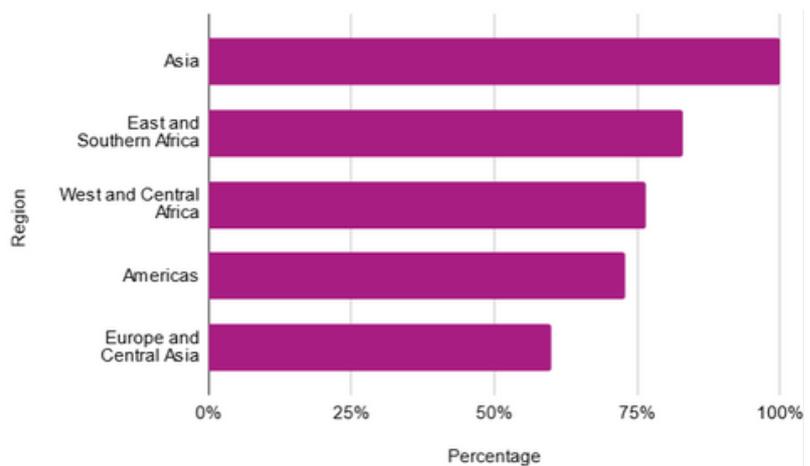


Guadalupe Sosa, a member of Street Vendor Project in New York, by her stall, in June 2023.

Street vendors occupy public spaces, and are an integral and fundamental part of cities, especially as they are often the only ones granting access to food and water to the urban poor. Despite their role being essential for the sustenance of communities, vendors are often criminalized by authorities, subjected to police violence and forced evictions from their workplaces.

In all of the regions where StreetNet is present, a very high percentage of affiliate organizations have reported their members being evicted.

In Asia, all of the organizations suffered at least one episode of violence against their members. In an impressive number of cases, the vendors were displaced from their usual workplaces and left without any alternative.



How many affiliates reported evictions (percentage per region).

CRACKDOWN ON MIGRANT STREET VENDORS IN NEW YORK, USA

The municipal authority of New York City has been cracking down on vending a lot in the past year. In Corona Plaza, around 80 Street Vendor Project members were removed from their workplace by armed Department of Sanitation police in the summer. 14 have been allowed to return to work but the others have had to find other places to work. In Hudson Yards, around 215 members were displaced this year. In December, around 40 members were displaced from working on the Brooklyn Bridge, where some of them had been working for as long as 20 years (Street Vendor Project, New York)



Climate change



StreetNet affiliate MUFIS in Malawi distributing packages for victims of Cyclone Freddy in April 2023. (Photo by MUFIS)

Almost 80% of organizations in StreetNet understand that climate change has affected street vending in their countries. The main effects reported were, in order of most mentioned: extreme weather (droughts, floods, heavy rains, landslides etc.), increases in prices of farm products and increase of forced migration.



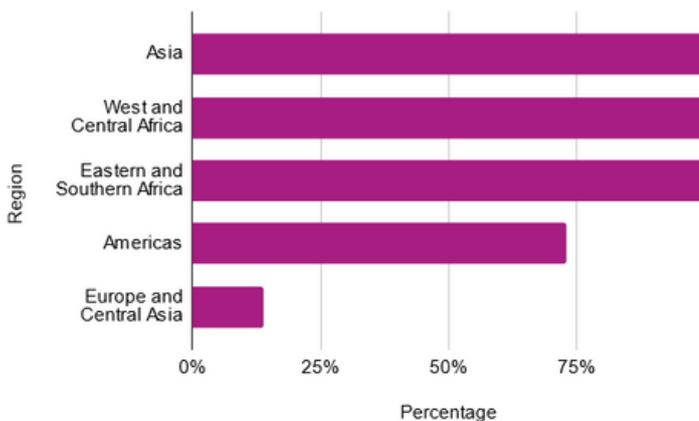
Extreme weather



Increased prices



Forced migration



Percentage of affiliate who think climate change will impact their constituencies

The totality of organizations in Asia, East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa demonstrated the **understanding that climate change affects street vendors significantly.**

Asia members identify that in addition to the above mentioned more frequently identified effects, climate change also causes problems such as mental and psychosocial stress, increase in health issues and indebtedness, as well as instability of work and income.

JOINT RESEARCH ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN NICARAGUA

Our affiliate CTCP-FNT in Nicaragua is collaborating on a project with local universities to identify the impacts of climate change on the health of vendors, to study and generate protective measures.

What are our members advocating for?

Our affiliates report that **87% of the member organizations of StreetNet attempted or held dialogue with public authorities and governments in 2023**. Among them, 76.5% of organizations attempted to or held dialogue at the local level, and 64% of them attempted to/held dialogue at the national level.

Around **80% of the StreetNet organizations** that responded to the questionnaire declared to have carried out activities and/or **advocacy work on social protection/social security in 2023**.

67% of the organizations reported to have carried out efforts towards fighting **harassment and violence** in the workplace in 2023.

34% of our affiliates reported advances in the policies in favor of street vendors in their countries. The organizations that reported progress mentioned the opening of tripartite dialogues with the participation of street vendors, government actions to promote ratification of ILO Convention 190 and formalization policies that take into consideration the ILO Recommendation 204.

Furthermore, **Moldova, Rwanda, Nigeria and Sierra Leone ratified ILO Convention 190 during the year**.



City authorities are privileged counterparts for street vendors' advocacy efforts, as many policies impacting their lives are developed at municipal levels.

CONVENTION 190

ILO Convention No. 190 (or ILO C190 for short) is the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. It applies to all workers, including the ones in the informal economy. It was adopted in 2019. (Source: ilo.org)

RECOMMENDATION 204

The ILO Recommendation 204 (ILO R204) provides guidance to the tripartite constituents (governments, workers' and employers' organizations) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on how to facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and was developed with the aim of ensuring decent work for all. The Recommendation follows a rights-based approach to formalization. It was adopted in 2015. (Source: ilo.org)

Success Stories

UGTI, Colombia | Americas

OBTAINING THOUSANDS OF LICENSES FOR STREET VENDORS



Member of UGTI in Medellín, Colombia, 2023.

UGTI, our affiliate from Colombia, has been negotiating with the municipal authority in Medellín, in the North-West of the country, to grant access to public space for the vendors.

In 2023, UGTI successfully obtained the approval of **5000 new selling licenses for its members.**

NIDAWU, Namibia | East and Southern Africa

A NEW POLICY FOR THE INFORMAL ECONOMY



Market in Windhoek, Namibia, in 2022.

NIDAWU has successfully participated in the development of the **National Policy for the Informal Economy and the National Diagnostic of Informality**, an ambitious study of the causes and consequences of the informal economy in the country.

The National Policy will integrate the information collected. It will, moreover, be informed by the Recommendation 204 of ILO, the main international instrument guiding the way towards just formalization.

SEWA, India | Asia

COMBATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE



Street vendor members of SEWA in Ahmedabad, 2022.

SEWA, an all-women organization based in India, is working on the establishment of **Local Complaint Committees** which serve as the complaint mechanism to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

The committees should exist according to the Sexual Harassment at Workplace act of 2013. Local Committees are formed for workers in the informal economy but they are not functioning properly as per the law. SEWA is actively working to make the committees a reality that can protect women informal economy workers who are subjected to violence during their activities.

NEGOTIATING A ONE-STOP FOR CROSS-BORDER TRADERS



ASSOVACO members meeting with government officials in 2022 (Picture by ASSOVACO).

ASSOVACO is active in the eastern part of DRC, and over 80% of their members are informal cross-border traders. ASSOVACO managed to successfully negotiate with the authorities in the border city of Goma (close to the Rwandan border) to have a **one-stop post for the traders to complete all the border formalities in a simpler and more efficient way.**

INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, “informal cross-border trade is trade between neighboring countries conducted by vulnerable, small, unregistered traders.” Informal cross-border trade makes up for a large part of the informal economy worldwide, especially in regions such as West and Central Africa. A lot of informal traders sell goods across borders and face obstacles specific to their situation: to begin with, they are often not registered with authorities and are not recognized by the State. Like many other informal economy workers, however, they provide a vital contribution to their countries' economies.

Final thoughts on our members' reality in 2023

The year 2023 was a challenging year for street vendors and other informal traders members of StreetNet International. **With the major global economic crisis, as a result of factors such as the Covid-19 Pandemic and the prolonged effects of its economic losses, the impact of the war in Ukraine, the conflict between Israel and Palestine and the consequent rising inflation that lead to a high cost of living, countries' economies are devastated, victimizing the poorest most of all.** Economic hardship deepened for the working class worldwide, specially for those on the front line of the informal economy such as street vendors. Added to this, the world faces the effects of climate change that are no longer abstract but rather affect the daily lives of the entire population of the planet, and not differently, the lives of street vendors.

Street vendors, having to make a living and thrive in this harsh reality, still encounter a hostile environment in their relationship with the State, a scenario in which street vendors are made invisible, not recognized as workers or subjects of citizenship, excluded from the framework of labor rights and social protection. And yet they still face State violence, daily harassment and attacks by agents responsible for monitoring the use of public space.

Despite this, street vendors are responsible for making a great part of the countries' economies run and cannot afford to stop working in the face of obstacles in their lives. They continue working, continuing to organize, to build their organizations and fighting for their rights. **StreetNet therefore keeps moving forward in the international fight for street vendors recognition and decent work.**

4. Our 7th International Congress

2023 was a crucial year for StreetNet, the year of our 7th International Congress.

The International Congress is the supreme governing body of StreetNet, a space where the workers' leaders can exercise democracy, solidarity and accountability.



Delegates of the 7th International Congress in Kigali, Rwanda, in May 2023.

The International Congress was attended by **139 delegates** from **49 countries**, **60% of which were women**, 14 invited international guests, 4 youth reporters, 10 team members and 10 interpreters.

The theme of the 7th International Congress was “**Power In Solidarity**”, a motto which mirrors the experience of StreetNet in the last four years and its impact on the members across the world.

Three Commissions worked to ensure the good functioning of the Congress and the respect of the rules and constitutional procedures: the **Credentials Commission** (composed by two members, who verified each delegate's right to vote); **Electoral Commission** (composed by two members, who supervised and ensured fairness and transparency during the electoral process); **Resolution Commission** (composed by five members, who analyzed the proposed resolutions and constitutional amendments and proposed them to plenary for a vote).

In addition, for the first time, delegates worked on 4 parallel commissions to discuss specific themes and propose resolutions. The parallel commissions focused on **Just Transition and Climate Change**; **Formalization and Social Dialogue**; **Social Solidarity Economy and Social Protection**.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE 7TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS



Resolution 44 on Support to affiliates who are experiencing the suspension of their livelihood as a result of war, pandemic, climate change and natural disasters, violence, and economic deprivation. Several of our affiliates and their members live in situations of conflicts, war, epidemics, or experience dire climate change consequences. StreetNet is in solidarity with all people affected by violence, and will support them within its scope and mission.



Resolution 45 on Initiating implementation of the ILO Recommendation 204 through collective bargaining with informal economy workers' participation. It encourages all the affiliates to initiate approaches to their governments for the effective implementation of Recommendation 204



Resolution 46 on the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE); an update of the existing Resolution 19, approved by the 4th International Congress in 2010. StreetNet reaffirms the importance of the principles of the Social and Solidarity Economy (democratic organization, mutual support, profit sharing) for informal economy workers.



Resolution 47: on Social Protection, so each StreetNet Affiliate advocates and petition its government to extend Social Protection coverage to the workers in the informal economy with technical and other necessary support from StreetNet.



Resolution 48 on Climate Change and Just Transition. It has the goal of increasing the awareness among StreetNet members about the pressing issue of climate change and ecological crisis around the world, keeping in mind the role of workers in the informal economy in a just transition. StreetNet affiliates will work to pressure governments to adhere to the Paris Agreement and UN Conference of Parties (COP) commitments on the reduction of greenhouse gasses.



Delegates discussing and approving Resolutions during the 7th International Congress in Rwanda, May 2023

ELECTED LEADERS

Lorraine Sibanda (Zimbabwe) was elected as President, Alberto Santana (Dominican Republic) as Vice-President, Jamaladdin Ismayilov (Azerbaijan) as Secretary and Jeanette Nyiramassengesho (Rwanda) as Treasurer. Eleven other leaders were elected, making up a total of 15 for our International Council.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



President Lorraine Sibanda
ZCIEA - Zimbabwe



Vice-President Alberto Santana
FUTTEINCO - Dominican Republic



Treasurer Jeanette Nyiramassengesho
SYTRIECI - Rwanda



Secretary Jamaladdin Ismayilov
Xhidmat-ISH - Azerbaijan

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL MEMBERS



Alice Nkuzimana
SYVEBU - Burundi



Kashiwa Lameck
AZIEA - Zambia



Afiavi Anastasie Chodaton
SYNAVAMAB - Benin



Martha Garcia Santoyo
FNOTNA - Mexico



Anthony Kwache
KENASVIT - Kenya



Maya Gurung
NEST - Nepal



Gbenga Komolafe
FIWON - Nigeria



Mwijuka Jesca
UMAEU - Uganda



Jorge Antonio Peralta
FENTRAVIG - Guatemala



Tamara Bodnari
MBS - Moldova



José Herminio Diaz Guevara
FESTIVES - El Salvador

5. Our work in 2023

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Regional Conference on Social Protection | 21-22 June 2023 | Lagos, Nigeria



*Participants of the conference visiting FIWON's cooperative, Lagos, Nigeria, 2023.
Photo by StreetNet Youth Reporter Djenabou Sow.*

We organized a regional conference on social protection for informal economy workers with WIEGO and FIWON, our Nigerian affiliate, in Lagos (Nigeria), where we designed a **regional platform of demands** with our affiliates and key partners, such as the Platform for Social Protection and ITUC Africa, to ensure the protection of all African workers.

There were around 20 trade unionists present, both men and women. StreetNet affiliates from 11 different African nations were represented. The International Alliance of Waste Pickers, the International Federation of Domestic Workers, HomeNet International, the African Platform for Social Protection, and ITUC Africa were also present, as well as the National Social Security Authority of Zimbabwe.

The purpose of the conference was to provide a forum for exchange by talking about and offering potential solutions with representatives of the informal economy workers and their partners. During the conference, participants engaged in group discussions and field visits, including to the FIWON Cooperative and to the University of Lagos' Centre for Housing and Sustainable Development.

WHAT WORKERS SAID



"StreetNet International has assisted us in advocating for and increasing awareness of the need to improve working conditions for persons in the informal economy in Senegal."

Annie Diouf, Confederal Secretary in charge of the informal economy department of the National Confederation of Workers of Senegal (CNTS)



Representatives of BOISA (Botswana) visiting child care facilities of SYTRIECI (Rwanda), as part of the visit in 2023.
Picture by Youth Reporter Dorcas Ishimwe Ratchetée.

Affiliate organizations of StreetNet **SYTRIECI (Rwanda)**, **BOISA (Botswana)** and **SEWA (India)** participated in a project about the inclusion of childcare facilities in markets, throughout the year 2023. The childcare project is being implemented with the support of WIEGO Focal City in Ghana.



Since women are the majority of market vendors as well as the main carers of their families, they often bring their children to work. **Children of vendors need proper care and structures to avoid marginalization especially due to lack of education and lack of safety.**

The project looks into childcare facilities in and around markets where informal economy workers operate from. After one year of implementation of the project and following the experience of the WIEGO team based in Ghana, the group of affiliates met in Accra from 31 July to 5 August 2023.

The objective of the project is to advocate for better facilities in markets that take into account the needs of both mothers and children and to exchange best practices between participant countries. In November 2023, **the first exchange visit took place in Kigali**, between the Rwanda and Botswana teams, to visit the childcare facilities of three main areas in the Rwandan capital.

WHAT WORKERS SAID



“It was not easy to work with children but now that we have childcare centers we are able to leave children in a safe place and work without a problem”

Uwamahoro Rosine, vendor in Kigali, member of SYTRIECI

Leadership training | 1-3 August 2023 | Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania



StreetNet leadership and staff in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, 2023.

From 1st to 3rd August, 2023 in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, we held our first international leadership training for the newly elected members of the International Council. **The aim of the leadership training was to discuss in depth some of the duties, rights and responsibilities within the mandate of the Council members, as well as to strengthen ties and solidarity among the new leadership.**

Participants also had the possibilities to discuss the qualities of effective leadership in the context of a global organization such as StreetNet. The training was organized by StreetNet and hosted by TUICO, our affiliate organization in Tanzania which is also the regional focal point for East and Southern Africa. The leaders also had the opportunity to reflect on and analyze the Constitution, the supreme governing document for StreetNet, with a particular focus on their roles.

The sessions were facilitated by President Lorraine Sibanda, Jane Barrett, ORP Director at WIEGO and expert of management and leadership within the labor movement, and by Michelene Benson, accredited coach and facilitator. Pat Horn, founder of StreetNet and Senior Advisor, walked the participants through a brief constitutional history of the organization, from the founding congress to the most recent developments.

WHAT WORKERS SAID



“This training is really important, especially for the newly elected. We need to know how the system is moving, so that we can help our organization proceed smoothly”.

Jescah Mwijuka, International Council member from Uganda.

Social Solidarity Economy Workshop | 14-16 November 2023 São Paulo, Brazil



Workshop participants visiting the COOPAMARE cooperative of waste pickers in São Paulo, November 2023.

We organized an international workshop in Brazil from 14-16 November 2023, about the **Social and Solidarity Economy**. The workshop focused on its importance for the organizations of informal economy workers and participants had the opportunity to learn from each other and exchange best practices. The workshop included the contributions of Ari Aloraldo from CUT Brazil; Ivan Gonzales of CSA-TUCA; State Secretary Gilberto Carvalho of the National Secretariat for Solidarity and Popular Economy of the Labour Ministry of Brazil and Simel Esim from ILO Coop.

It also featured allied organizations with valuable best practices to share, including the Union of Popular Economy Workers – UTEP (Argentina) and Brazil’s National Movement of Recycled Material Collectors – MNCR, and a presentation by Leandro Morais, of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSSSE). The workshop was paired with the celebration for November 14th, the International Day of Street Vendors.



As a result of the workshop, a **Strategic Plan of Actions on Social and Solidarity Economy** has been developed to intensively advance the work in this area especially at national level.

WHAT WORKERS SAID



“Cooperatives are a tool for liberation. The members of a cooperative have a commitment to always improve because they are investing their resources. It is also a democratic tool, because everyone participates and holds each other accountable”

Alberto Santana, Vice-President of StreetNet, from Dominican Republic.

Our field visits

Field visits are a crucial part of our work at StreetNet. It is how we come to understand the issues affecting informal traders all over the world in such detail. Through field visits, **we document the work of our affiliates and we discover new organizations.** They are also an opportunity for the local affiliate to **gain more recognition and visibility**, as we usually arrange networking meetings with key partners and authorities. In 2023, our leadership and team participated in the following field visits:



StreetNet delegation visiting AMÉLIOR's market in Paris, February 2023.

- **Paris and Marseille, France** | February 2023 | We visited the two cities where our most recent affiliate AMÉLIOR is currently organizing street vendors and waste pickers, also known as biffins. The visit to Paris included the presence of International Coordinator Oksana Abboud as well as Kateryna Yarmolyuk-Kroeck, Organizer for Europe and Central Asia, Margarida Teixeira, Communication Manager, Irene Doda, Media Assistant, and Nash Tysmans, Organizer for Asia. The visit to Marseille was conducted by Kateryna and Margarida.
- **Astana, Kazakhstan and Tashkent, Uzbekistan** | March-April 2023 | The visits to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were conducted by StreetNet Secretary Jamaladdin Ismayilov and Kateryna Yarmolyuk-Kroeck, Organizer for Europe and Central Asia, with the goal of understanding the work of the Trade Union of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan and the Trade Union of Entrepreneurs, Business and Service Sectors of Uzbekistan.
- **Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria** | June 2023 | StreetNet team members Jane Masta, Organizer for East and Southern Africa; Evelyn Benjamin-Sampson, Organizer for West and Central Africa and Kateryna Yarmolyuk-Kroeck, Organizer for Europe and Central Asia, visited key partners in Abuja, such as Nigeria Labour Congress, OTWUA and Solidarity Center, and markets with workers of our Nigerian affiliate FIWON in Lagos.
- **New York City, USA** | June 2023 | International Coordinator Oksana Abboud, Admin and Finance Manager Annelene Shahbaz and Communication Manager Margarida Teixeira visited our affiliate Street Vendor Project, a city-based organization in New York.
- **Niamey, Niger and Ouagadougou, Burkina-Faso** | July 2023 | Evelyn Benjamin-Sampson, Organizer for West and Central Africa, visited two of the regional affiliates: UGSEIN in Niger and SYNAFVL in Burkina-Faso, where she got to see first-hand the difference these organizations make for people with disabilities (Niger) and women traders (Burkina-Faso).
- **Quito, Ecuador** | November 2023 | Americas Regional Focal Point representative Guillermo Giraldo and Organizer for Americas Patrick Kane visited the potential StreetNet affiliate UCOMTAE - Union of Retailers and Autonomous Workers of Ecuador, to understand more about their work and whether it fulfills the criteria for StreetNet membership, as well as to learn about and collect information on the reality of informal traders in Quito and network with new allies and partners.
- **Phnom Penh, Cambodia** | December, 2023 | Regional Organizer for Asia Nash Tysmans and Media Assistant Irene Doda visited markets and regional partners during a Negotiation Skills training.

EDUCATION

Training on organizing informal economy workers | 9-11 October, 2023 | Chisinau, Moldova

We organized a regional workshop for our Europe and Central Asia affiliates at the Central National Trade Union (CNSM) Institute of Labour in Chisinau, focused on “**Organizing and mobilizing informal economy workers**”, from 9 to 11 October 2023. The workshop was facilitated by the International Coordinator Oksana Abboud and Regional Organizer Kateryna Yarmolyuk-Kroeck. After three days of discussions and group work, representatives of the affiliates agreed on the following recommendations for the future:

- To cooperate with national trade union centers in approaching the issues of organizing informal economy workers workers;
- To pay special attention to the needs of specific categories of informal economy workers, such as **women, youth and elderly people**;
- To cooperate with partners for mobilizing resources for recruiting new members.



Participants of the workshop in Moldova, 2023.

Training on Negotiation Skills | 11-14 December 2023 | Phnom Penh, Cambodia

From 11th to 14th December we held a negotiation skills workshop in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, for our affiliate IDEA. **The goal was to promote successful social dialogue between workers and authorities.** The negotiation skills workshop was developed in the context of a joint project led by StreetNet, Oxfam, and the Belgian Development Agency and lasted 3 and a half days. The participants were all members of the local affiliate IDEA (Independent Democracy of Informal Economy Associations). It was facilitated by Nash Tysmans, StreetNet’s Organizer for Asia. The diversity of IDEA membership (street vendors, home-based workers, transport workers) was reflected by the composition of the participants.

Negotiation skills are fundamental for improving the dialogue between authorities and trade unions. Social dialogue is the process of involving workers, employers and the state in a process that aims at ameliorating the conditions of every citizen. Workers in the informal economy are almost never involved in tripartite processes. Facilitating inclusive social dialogue is a core pillar of StreetNet’s mission.



IDEA members participants of the workshop in Cambodia, 2023.

WHAT WORKERS SAID



“After graduating I took over my family business as a vendor of soft drinks . I am a member of IDEA. This is my first time attending such training. I have a lot of new knowledge and met a lot of new people”

Long Chansreyleak, street vendor and member of IDEA, Cambodia.

ADVOCACY

International Labour Conference 2023



Delegation of StreetNet, HomeNet, IDWF, IAWP and WIEGO to the International Labour Conference in Geneva, June 2023.

StreetNet International along with other global organizations of informal economy workers participated at the International Labour Conference, focusing on Just Transition and Labour Protection, from 5-16 June 2023.



The International Labour Conference, often called the world's parliament of labor, is the highest decision-making body of the International Labour Organization. It meets once a year in Geneva, Switzerland, and sets labor standards for the whole world.

StreetNet's delegation to the ILC was composed of StreetNet's President Lorraine Sibanda, Vice-President Alberto Santana and two members of the staff: International Coordinator Oksana Abboud and Media and Communication Manager Margarida Teixeira.

Our delegation focused mainly on two working committees: the **General Discussion Committee on a Just Transition** and the **Recurrent Discussion Committee on Labour Protection**.

Regarding the General Discussion Committee on a Just Transition, the conclusions recognize that *"ensuring a just transition is important for all countries at all levels of development, and for all economic sectors, the formal as well as the informal economy"* (Clause 14) and states the governments should *"promote a conducive environment for social and solidarity economy entities to strengthen their capacity to contribute to the just transition"* (Clause 21 (n)). **Both these items are especially important for informal economy workers' organizations especially at national level.**

As for the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Labour Protection, the **conclusions acknowledge that informality is an obstacle to labour protection** and stress the urgency to *"address the transition from informal to formal economy and from insecure to secure work that is decent, the diversity of enterprises and of national circumstances, is a condition for the design and implementation of well-tailored and inclusive labour protection strategies for all workers."* (Clause 21).

StreetNet recognizes the importance of the ILC as a solidarity space for workers, as well as a crucial institutional framework for making our voices heard.

Urban October and the campaign for diverse and inclusive urban economies



Promotional material of the Diverse and Inclusive Urban Economies campaign, 2023, by the Global Platform on the Right to the City

The month of October is commonly known as **Urban October** - a month globally dedicated to advocacy in the context of cities and towns. **StreetNet is active to make sure street vendors have access to decent work conditions in public spaces, and that urban policies are designed to be inclusive for workers.** For Urban October we launched a joint campaign with our allies at the Global Platform for the Right to the City (GPR2C), RIPESS, Urgenci and WIEGO to raise awareness that informal economy workers are a key component of urban economies.

The campaign consisted of a research paper, published on the website of GPR2C and a public webinar held on October 26th, 2023. Frances Okonope, recently elected as President of FIWON, Nigeria, represented StreetNet, talking about the challenges of street vendors in public spaces in her country.

International solidarity: participation in Congresses



StreetNet President Lorraine Sibanda and International Coordinator Oksana Abboud at the IDWF 4th Congress in Belgium, 2023.

During the year, Street exercised international solidarity by participating in Congresses of our allied organizations and partners. These included:

- 28th Congress of IUF (International Union Federation) - June 2023, Switzerland
- 4th Congress of International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) - October 2023, Belgium
- 14th National Congress of CUT Brazil - October 2023, Brazil
- 5th Congress of ITUC-Africa - December 2023, Kenya



HOW CAN THE MEDIA PROMOTE DECENT WORK FOR STREET VENDORS?

17th October 2023

3pm - 5 pm SAT

INTERPRETATION:

English, Spanish, Hindi, French, Portuguese

Register on Zoom: <https://bitly.ws/VcwD>

 streetnet.org.za

Promotional material for webinar on October 2023, joining workers and journalists.

Throughout the year, we conducted a series of campaigns and public webinars, in addition to our activities for Urban October and for the International Labour Conference:

- On March 8th, for **International Women's Day**, we highlighted through a series of interviews, the incredible achievements of our women leaders around the world.
- For **Food Safety Day** (June 7th), we collected a series of beautiful pictures of typical food sold in markets around the world, showing how street vendors contribute to food diversity and richness in cities.
- For the **International Day of Street Vendors** (November 14th), we organized a photo exhibition in São Paulo, Brazil. The exhibition features amazing portraits of street vendors in various countries. It will be an itinerant exhibition that will travel with us in the next few years!
- On September 27th, we organized a **practice-sharing webinar about offline communication and grassroots mobilization**. Our affiliates had the opportunity to come together and have a discussion and peer-learning space to share experiences on how to communicate offline, and reach their constituencies without using digital tools.
- On October 17th, we held a public webinar with journalists and worker leaders titled "How can the media promote decent work for street vendors?", with guests from news outlets and human rights organizations. It was a great opportunity to discuss the possibility of alliance between workers' organizations and media to advocate for better conditions in the informal economy.
- On December 13th, we held an internal webinar for our affiliates to popularize the new **African Union Charter on Social Protection**. The document has been adopted by the African Union, and recognises social protection as an international human right. It needs at least 15 ratifications in order to officially enter into force. Our affiliates are at the forefront of this action in the African Continent.

Press and Media

We are regularly in contact with international journalists to raise the profile of StreetNet and its affiliates in global media. Here are some news articles, features and op-ed where StreetNet was mentioned in 2023. For the complete list, you can refer to the [Press Room](#) on our website!

- In January 2023, a mass protest was organized in Kathmandu, Nepal, to push back against evictions and violence on street vendors by the municipal authorities.

Republica Nepal covered the story. [Read the article.](#)

- On March 8th, for International Women's Day, our worker leader from Brazil Maria Do Carmo de Lourdes published an op-ed in the feminist publication **Ms. Magazine**, one of the leading voices of feminism in the United States. [Read the article.](#)

- Our Congress was covered by **Africa.com** one the leading news websites of the continent. [Read the article.](#)

- In June 2023, our participation in the International Labour Conference was covered by the **Thomson Reuters Foundation**, which gave space to the demands and voices of the informal economy workers in the just transition movement. [Read the article.](#)

- Our regional organizer for Asia, Nash Tysmans published an op-ed on the **Asia Labour Review**, an independent publication. [Read the article.](#)

- **Rede TVT**, a local Brazilian news network, ran a video feature on our Social Solidarity Economy workshop that took place in São Paulo in November. The video report covered also the celebration of Street Vendors' Day, on November 14th. [Watch the video.](#)

Aren't We Workers, Too?

3/7/2023 by MARIA DO CARMO DE LOURDES

Our work as street vendors seems invisible. We move countries' economies with our sweat, we earn our bread for our families. We are the pillar of the popular economy—yet we do not have protections. It's time we take a stand for our rights.



Durban beachfront African Street Market, South Africa. (Bobby Marie)



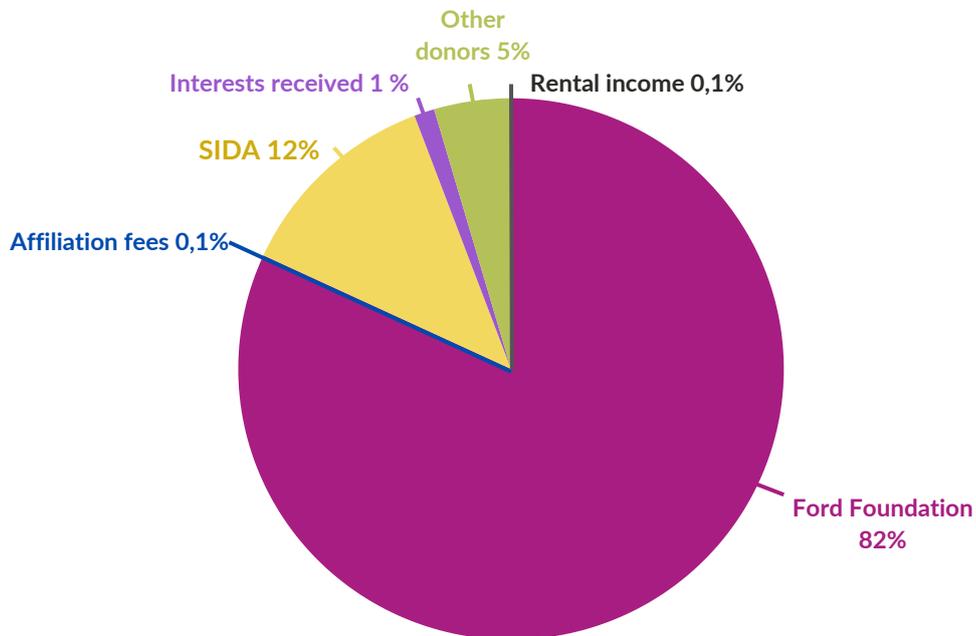
"The path is full of pitfalls. We should not be discouraged. We should go until the end – until we will win".

Anastasie Chodaton, International Council member from Benin

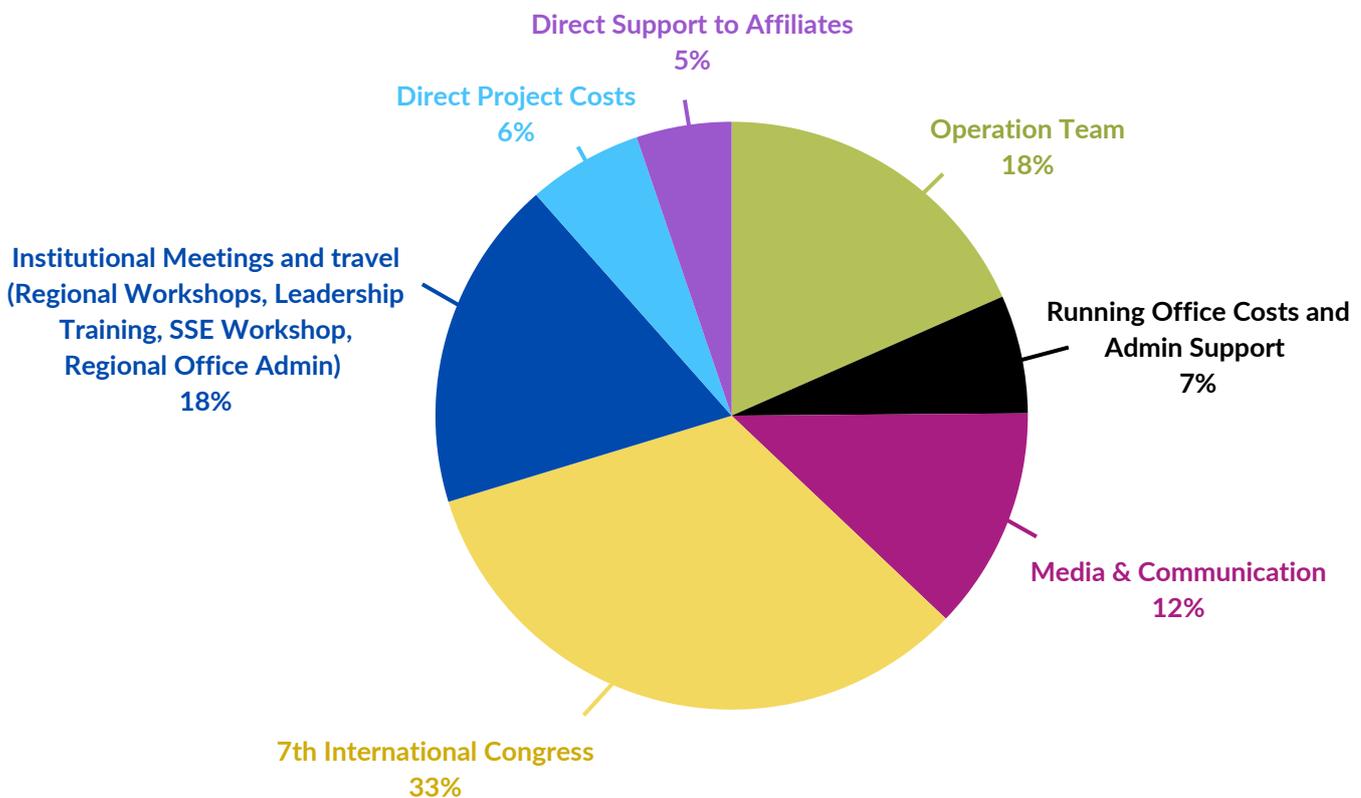
6. Our financial capacity

In 2023, we had the support of the following partners: the Ford Foundation, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Oxfam International.

Our income



Our expenditure





StreetNet International President Lorraine Sibanda.

7. Conclusion by **Lorraine Sibanda** StreetNet President

StreetNet continues to work as a representative international body for workers in the informal economy, particularly street vendors.

As a leader, I hope that in the coming years I can see StreetNet be recognized in the countries of different affiliates as a representative of informal economy workers in social dialogue platforms. We must continue pushing to have our voices at the table and self-represent, working closely with trade unions.

In many countries, there continues to be **violence and harassment** targeting street vendors. We have to upscale our advocacy in this area and continue to engage national governments, but also trade unions and civil society organizations for support.

But we must never forget that we are workers, informal economy workers, **speaking on our own behalf**, and present our clear expectations from governments. We must measure those expectations against existing International Labour Standards, which also protect workers in the informal economy, particularly **Convention 190 of the ILO on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work**. But we know we cannot approach this Convention individually, but that it must be aligned with **Recommendation 204 on transition from the informal to the formal economy**, which has clear conditions on how Member-States of the ILO should facilitate this process. Because it is a process. We know we cannot just dive into formality, that is not the sustainable way of approaching it.

Reflecting on our work done so far and looking at our affiliates, it is also critical to have a well-informed membership. I am happy that we continue to do **negotiations and collective bargaining training for members in different regions**. This is a critical area for us, because, as informal economy workers, we continue to engage and negotiate with local authorities, who are usually directly responsible for our operations.

We should continue these training courses but also adapt them to different levels, so that identified negotiation teams can work not only at local or national level, but also at the regional one. **As StreetNet, we need to set ourselves apart and be the representative voice that speaks at these higher levels too. Our international voice is already there and we should continue to build on that and capacitate as many leaders as possible.**



We must continue to work towards having programs **which speak to the different groups of people we find working in the informal economy**. We must invest in youth. As we move further with our work, we should consciously and deliberately have activities and programs and move towards having an international youth structure. We should see the youth self-represent and articulate their issues, aligning to SNI principles and values through educational training and their own practice as members.

We must also not forget the **continuing capacitation of women**. There is still a gap in terms of having women leaders who are capable of representing themselves and speaking on their own behalf, but also who are able to lead all and any structures without particularly concentrating on women's issues.

We should also plan for a key structure which we have not established yet, of focusing on people with disabilities. We cannot work towards empowerment of a group in the absence of others.

Another area of priority is **transparency and accountability**. We must have a voice that is well-informed, not only through training, but which can be self-accountable, with clear processes, and to which members can relate. We will continue to capacitate our affiliates to boost these procedures and equip them with tools to raise funds on their own.

These are some of the issues that we look forward to focusing on together in the future!



How to join StreetNet

If you are a representative and democratic membership-based organization of informal traders with a clear internal policy and at least 500 members, you can apply to join StreetNet! Contact us to access the affiliation application form and we will initiate the application process. All applications are considered by the StreetNet Executive Committee.

Contact us at:

media@streetnet.org.za

 media@streetnet.org.za

 +351 938 291 185

 www.streetnet.org.za

 @StreetNetInternational

 @street_net_international

 @Streetnet1

Front Cover Image: Edited version of picture by Nepal Union of Street Traders (NEST) - Kathmandu 2023.

Back Cover Image: Vendor Bun Rihong at Sereypheap Market in Phnom Penh. Picture by Enric Català, 2022.