





Credits

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and

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)

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2025



Tribute to Ela Ramesh Bhatt

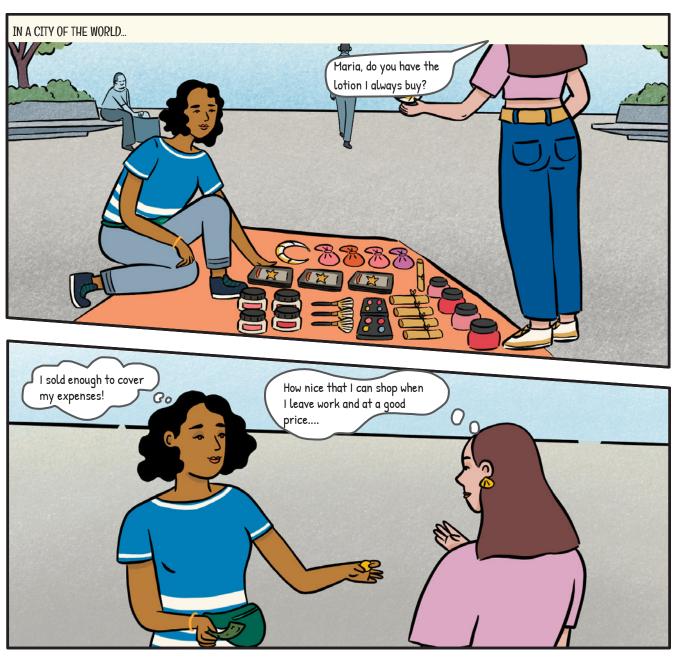
The gentle revolutionary: a pioneer in women's empowerment and grassroots development, founder of the more than 2 million member Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India. Member of the Indian Parliament 1986-89. Gandhian practitioner of non-violence and self-reliance.

A tribute to Sister Ela Bhatt, who – from within India's textile trade union mo-

vement and faced with the large layoffs after the country's independence – had a vision of how to organize workers in the informal economy to fight for their rights and have more dignified living conditions.

She knew the secret lay in building collectiveness and self-reliance, which creates solidarity, overcomes individualism, increases income, alleviates poverty and empowers, thus creating collective strength to demand rights.

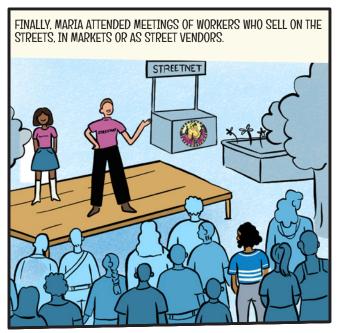
Long live the legacy of Ela Bhatt, to SEWA and to all organizations that were willing to build the Social and Solidarity Economy and strengthen workers in the informal economy.





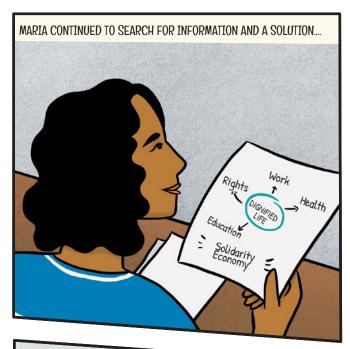






































In India, a group of women came together and formed a union of 2 million women.

With honesty, trust and goodwill, they set up their own cooperatives, their own childcare centres and their own bank - and it all started with mutual aid groups!



In Argentina, the workers of the popular economy joined together to create their own community dining room, and later on they managed to have their own cooperative...



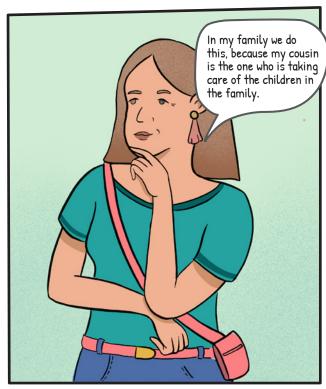
In Nigeria, the vendors have come together, saved and lent money to each other, and have even managed to collectively take out health insurance for their members. They have even managed to build their own houses!

All this with mutual cooperation and help!















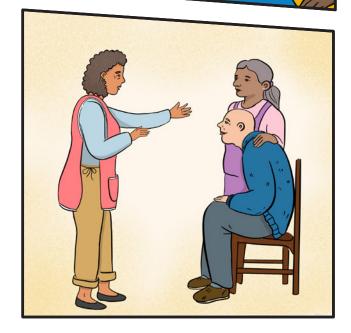




THE FOUR DISCUSSED THE PROJECT WITH MORE MARKET AND STREET VENDOR WORKERS, THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY THEIR FRIENDS OR ACQUAINTANCES.











Let's start by saving together, let's contribute one coin a day.

That way, if the police take our merchandise or we can't sell because of illness or the rains, we will have money to buy food.

We could also pay for a doctor's appointment.

And maybe in the future, when the savings grow, we can offer loans.

We will all decide together about money at meetings like this one.





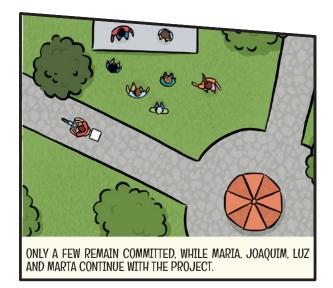
How do we know they are not going to steal our money?

Yes, also, who is going to be the leader?

Why should we trust you?

What if the projects are not respected?

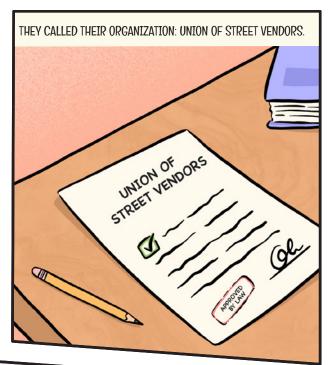


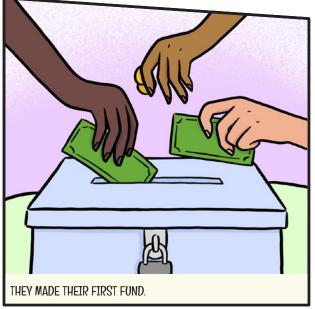




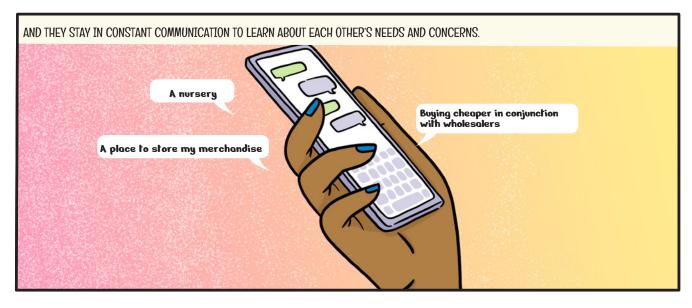








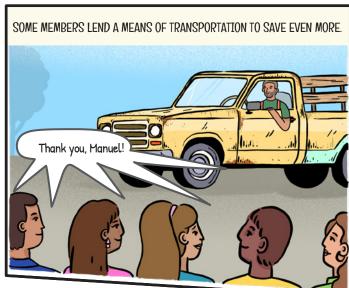






























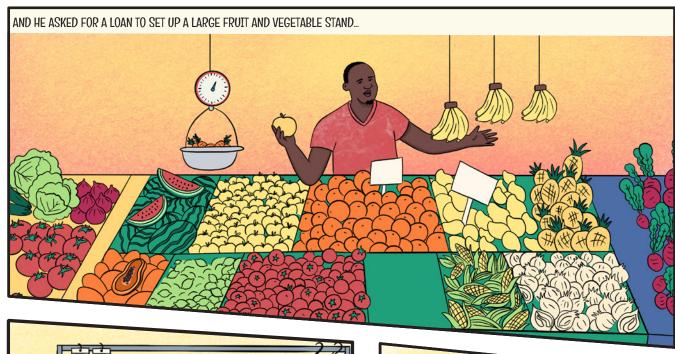
EVERYONE DID THEIR PART AND A COMMISSIONER FROM THE AUTHORITIES ATTENDS THEIR ASSEMBLIES.



WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARISE WITH THE POLICE OR THE MUNICIPALITY, THEY RESPOND COLLECTIVELY WITH FORCE AND BY DEFENDING THEIR RIGHTS.



JOAQUIM TOOK HIS MOTHER TO THE DOCTOR THANKS TO A PARTNERSHIP THE ORGANIZATION CREATED WITH A MEDICAL CLINIC, AS THEY OFFER VERY AFFORDABLE PRICES.

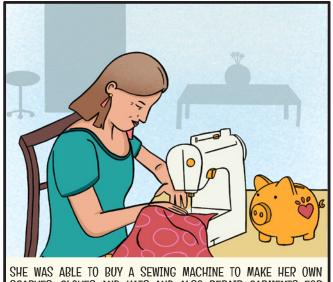




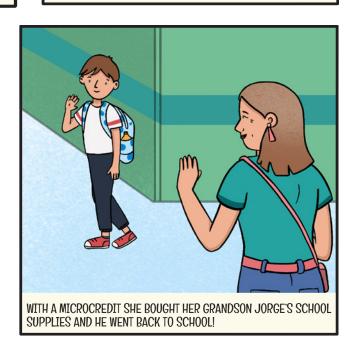
MARTA AND BENITO ALSO TOOK OUT A LOAN AND IMPROVED THEIR WORK EQUIPMENT, WERE ABLE TO BUY MORE MERCHANDISE AND THUS EXPAND THEIR SUPPLY OF GOODS, GENERATING A HIGHER INCOME.

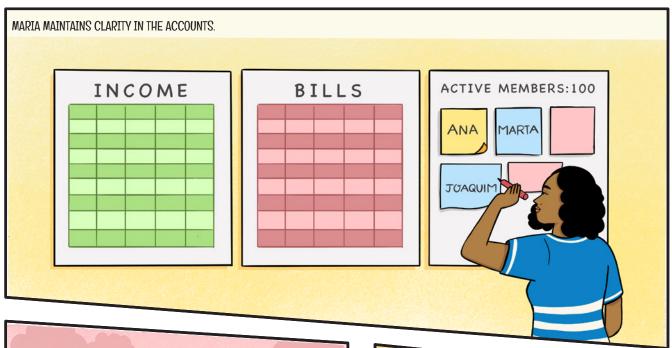


LUZ TAKES HER GRANDSON TO THE ORGANIZATION'S COMMUNITY KITCHEN, WHERE THEY CAN BOTH EAT AT A VERY CHEAP PRICE.



SHE WAS ABLE TO BUY A SEWING MACHINE TO MAKE HER OWN SCARVES, GLOVES AND HATS AND ALSO REPAIR GARMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION.











The organization will thrive, because it is in everyone's hands.

And they want to bring this message to more workers in the informal economy.

THE END





About WIEGO

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) is a global network focused on empowering the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy to secure their livelihoods. We believe all workers should have equal economic opportunities, rights, protection and voice. WIEGO promotes change by improving statistics and expanding knowledge on the informal economy, building networks and capacity among informal worker organizations and, jointly with the networks and organizations, influencing local, national and international policies. Visit www.wiego.org

About StreetNet International

StreetNet International is a global network of organizations of street vendors and market traders dedicated to democratically representing the interests of people working in the sector and advocating for their rights. Today, StreetNet International operates in over 55 countries and has more than 800,000 members worldwide. Our goal is to strengthen and support affiliated organizations to protect and promote the rights and livelihoods of street vendors and market traders, especially women. For this purpose, we encourage advocacy, capacity building, education, democratic governance, representation, and solidarity among all workers.

Visite www.streetnet.org.za