Women Informal Workers and the Empowering Nature of Collectivizing and Collectives
An Evidence Synthesis

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

Advances women have made in the areas of health and education are glaringly absent in the economic sphere. The gender gap continues despite concentrated investment to support entrepreneurship training, skills development, and access to finance into contexts of development and high informality. There is a growing recognition that the structures of society and economies themselves are inequitable and preventing women's access to social and economic opportunities. This understanding makes it necessary to illuminate the often unacknowledged ways that women are disadvantaged, and to purposively shift how we represent and value 'women's work'.

Improvements in working conditions for women informal workers and in the experience of women in the workplace has often come as a result of collective action. Collective action can come in many forms, spanning a more formal to an informal nature. Regardless the formality, collectives are essential mechanisms for bringing people together to represent themselves as a group, demand change, and hold leaders accountable. However, workers do not all have equal access to forms of collective action. Informal workers, and in particularly those who operate in isolation, without recognition as workers from an employer or from the state have fewer opportunities to collectivize. Women are especially vulnerable in this category as they are more likely to work in the informal economy and their isolation can be driven by factors beyond the nature of their job. Collectivization is an important avenue for developing women's empowerment through personal capacity building, developing bonds with other women, and representing themselves and their needs in wider society and in the economy.

Objectives

The goal of this evidence synthesis is to answer the question: **How does women informal worker's participation in various types of collectives intersect with increases in their empowerment?**
The objectives of this evidence synthesis are to investigate:

      (1) women informal worker collectives;

      (2) collectivizing and women's empowerment within informal employment sector; and

      (3) the ecosystem for enabling women informal workers to collectivize.

In order to effectively answer this question, an evidence synthesis approach has been employed. This is an approach to integrating findings from peer-reviewed and grey literature to summarize a substantive and diverse body of evidence (Karlsson & Takahashi, 2017).

Methodology

All academic literature was included as well as literature of a "grey" nature such as reports, briefs, newsletters, websites, etc. with a publication date range of 2000 to 2019. A keyword list was searched in library databases and Google searches employed to find the "grey" literature. Using the search criteria, over 165 publications were collected. The analysis process involved coding each publication based on the conceptual framework and emerging themes. An iterative approach to the analysis of the intersection between empowerment and women's collectives surfaced themes, patterns, trends, models and processes from the literature.

Results

As a body of literature, the number of case studies of collectives, personal narratives of women informal workers, and collective organizing stories is truly inspiring. What is clear is that for empowerment there is no end game; empowerment is ongoing, relative, contested, and importantly shared within and across

collectives and individual women informal workers. Also clearly demonstrated, women informal workers have benefited from collective action and the collectives they have created. The collectives they form (e.g., union, co-operative, network, self-help group, association etc.) reflect the needs of the women workers, the industry they are working in, the geographic community, and the enabling ecosystem surrounding them. There is no one size fits all for collective formation; however, through the development of collectives and the collectivizing process women informal workers do see increased economic empowerment.

In order for collectivized women's economic empowerment to occur three elements need to be in play: women informal workers have to be able to collectivize; the collectivizing process for both the individual informal workers and for the collective itself needs to be fostered; and the fostering of WEE in terms of resources and agency needs to be fore- fronted by the collective. The three elements are buttressed by supports that create an enabling ecosystem for women informal workers to collectivize. The community context (the cultural, social, and religious norms), and the policies, laws, and regulations of various levels of government highly affect the encouragement, backing and success of collective action and collectivizing. The enabling organizations range from the more formal, e.g., trade unions to the least formal, e.g., networks. The outlier in the enabling ecosystem is coincidence - something (or things) catalyze the collectivizing process to start/ grow/ mature despite other elements not being favourable.

Time and again the sense of agency women have gained through their involvement with a collective is transferred across their work space, their family dynamics, their communities, and often into transforming laws, rules or regulations in their work sector thus improving their economic status and future. Collectivized women workers are informing policy, transforming working practices, and tackling cultural, social and religious norms that are barriers to women's economic empowerment. These achievements are possible and recognized because women informal workers have joined and formed collectives to magnify their actions and demands.

Economic empowerment strategies for all dimensions are found within women informal worker collectives. While women informal workers' individual needs are often addressed first, building on these micro-level successes has shown to give momentum to members and leaders within the collectives to work towards the dimensions of empowerment that expand women workers' opportunities for leadership and representation. In all cases, the work and actions of individual workers and collectives are because the women see the benefit to collective action. They want to be agents of change in their economic and social lives.

Implications for Research, Practice and Policy
The critical centre bringing together literature on women informal workers, economic empowerment and collectives is ripe for further investigation. In particular further studies are needed on the economic empowerment of collectivized women informal workers in regions of development and high informality and comparative studies from areas of high formality and support. Research instruments and evaluation tools such as standardized definitions / scales of economic empowerment, along with gender-disaggregated data on global, national, and regional employment will greatly assist in closing the research gap.

In terms of practice – developing, supporting and fostering collectivized women's economic empowerment – the literature has highlighted the need to focus on practical economic needs (childcare, health), worker identity, and a collective identity among women informal workers as primary; to

identify and nurture natural leaders to start up organizing process once individual immediate / urgent needs are addressed (as much as possible); and to be aware of openings and opportunities for expanding collectives as they arise.

Policies need to continue the work of making visible the invisible women informal workers through collectivization. Supportive policy changes should include strengthening of gender parity regulations; regulatory system for women informal workers to participate in collectives; increasing worker visibility through identification and legislation; and tracking systems for informal workers in insecure, private working environments.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMUCC	Asociación de Mujeres Productoras Agropecuarias del Cauca
ASMARE	Associação dos Catadores de Papel, Papelão e Material Reaproveitável
CECAM	Caisses d'Epargne et de Crédit Agricole Mutuels
GNSWP	Global Network of Sex Work Projects
GROW	Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women
HWPRI	Association of the Indonesian Women Homeworkers
ICSF	International Collective in Support of Fishworkers
IDWF	International Domestic Workers Federation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
JALA PRT	Jaringan Nasional Advokasi Perkerja Rumah Tangga
KFAT	National Union of Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trades
KK	Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat
KUDHEIHA	Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotel, Educational Institution, Hospital, and Allied Workers
LDFC	League for Defence of Congolese Women
NASVI	National Alliance of Street Venders of India
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SIHA	Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Sustainable Development
WEIGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing
WEE	Women's economic empowerment
WFF	World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers
WFFP	World Forum of Fisher Peoples

Introduction

Advances women have made in the areas of health and education are glaringly absent in the economic sphere. The gender gap continues despite concentrated investment to support entrepreneurship training, skills development, and access to finance into contexts of development and high informality. There is a growing recognition that the structures of society and economies themselves are inequitable and preventing women's access to social and economic opportunities. This understanding makes it necessary to illuminate the often unacknowledged ways that women are disadvantaged, and to purposively shift how we represent and value 'women's work'.

The invisibility of women's work is evident from their over-representation in the most insecure work within the informal sector. The informal sector, also referred to as the informal, grey, or hidden economy, provides employment and income without government oversight or a social safety net (e.g., pension, fair wages, or unemployment insurance). It is a key part of the economy in many countries, providing employment to over two billion workers globally, 37% of whom are women (ILO, 2018). In South Asia 95% of employed women have informal employment, 89% in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 59% in Latin America and the Caribbean and globally 63% of women are employed in unpaid family work (UN Women, 2015, p. 102).

Women's informal work includes the least formal/most insecure end of the spectrum. Informal workers are the self-employed in small unregistered or incorporated microenterprises and wage workers without benefits or social protection, e.g., casual or day, sub-contracted, many domestic workers and unprotected employees of informal enterprises or formal firms (Bonner & Spooner, 2012). Lack of collective labour oversight globally and regionally has allowed modern day slavery to flourish in domestic worker, fishing, and other under-regulated industries (Klovborg, 2019). Women informal workers receiving moderate pay may also be in the informal/insecure end of the spectrum. The higher income means increased social capital, but they still do not have any job security or benefits. This type of informal worker status is on the rise for women around the world. Even within formal/more secure work, women still encounter exploitation in some trade unions when, for example, the patriarchal exploitation of women workers is not addressed (Bonner & Spooner, 2012).

Improvements in working conditions for women informal workers and in the experience of women in the workplace has often come as a result of collective action. Collective action can come in many forms spanning a more formal to informal nature. Regardless the formality, collectives are essential mechanisms for bringing people together to represent themselves as a group, demand change, and hold leaders accountable. However, not all workers benefit from collective action, particularly informal workers who operate in isolation, without recognition as workers from an employer or from the state. Women are especially vulnerable in this category, as they are more likely to work in the informal economy, and their isolation can be driven by factors beyond the nature of their job.

With these global / contextual understandings about informal women's work in mind, the goal of this this evidence synthesis is to answer the question: **How does women informal worker's participation in various types of collectives intersect with increases in their empowerment?**
The objectives of this evidence synthesis are to investigate:

      (1) women informal worker collectives;
      (2) collectivizing and women's empowerment within informal employment sector; and
      (3) the ecosystem for enabling women informal workers to collectivize.

In order to effectively answer this question, an evidence synthesis approach has been employed. This is an approach to integrating findings from peer-reviewed and grey literature to summarize a substantive and diverse body of evidence (Karlsson & Takahashi, 2017). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "an evidence synthesis is characterized by its systematic and transparent (i.e., replicable and observable) approach to formulating questions and searching, appraising, synthesizing and packaging the body of evidence to provide a more comprehensive picture than a single study could do" (Karlsson & Takahashi, 2017, p. 12).

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework at the basis of this study is guided by foundational notions that frame women's empowerment (Kabeer, 2005; Mosedale, 2005) as the process by which women redefine and extend what is possible for them to be and do, in situations where they have been restricted compared to men, from being and doing. The cornerstones of empowerment: knowledge of and ability to protect/uphold rights; autonomy; agency/influence; and access to resources, are also key to women's economic empowerment (WEE). Economic empowerment of women, the focus of this study, works towards women having equal access to economic resources; employment in safe and supportive conditions; agency within personal to local to global economic spheres; and voice/representation in key decision-making forums (CECI 2015; Oxfam Canada 2019; Malhotra and Schular, 2005; Huis et al, 2017).

The conceptual framework views WEE through a three-dimensional model adapted from the work of Huis, Hansen, Otten & Lensink, 2017; Malhotra and Schuler; 2005; CECI 2015; Oxfam Canada 2019; and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014. This model proposes that WEE takes place on three dimensions that are interrelated and overlapping: (1) WEE on the micro dimension is at the individual or personal level (e.g., understanding rights / law, getting paid fair wages, control of own wages, identifying as a 'worker', access to finances/credit and education/training); (2) the meso dimension takes place on the relational level (e.g., belonging to a women's network or a collective, negotiating work, influence among family / kin); and (3) the macro dimension are outcomes in the broader, societal and institutional context (e.g., active participation and
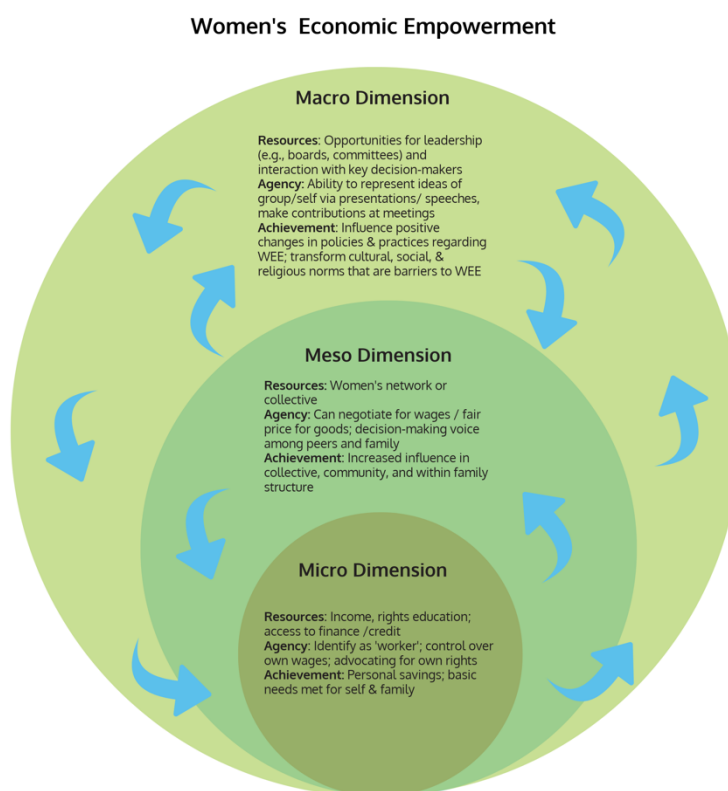

Figure 1: The WEE model shows the interrelations among the micro, meso, and macro dimensions of WEE and how the key elements of resources, agency and achievement play out at each level.

leadership on boards / committees; leading mobilizations; representing their group when presenting to key institutions).

Within each dimension of WEE are three interrelated elements that need to be addressed – resources, agency, and achievements (Kabeer, 2005; Mosedale, 2005). If women are able to access resources (income, networks, assets, etc.) and have the agency (power, decision-making, self-confidence, skills) needed to use (or to access) those resources, then the outcome is achievement (e.g., basic needs are met, women's wellbeing, children's health, elimination or reduction in violence) (Sen & Nussbaum 1995, cited in Kabeer 1999).

Methodology

This evidence synthesis collates the range of understandings researchers and practitioners have with regards to the critical juncture between women's collectives and empowerment. This was accomplished by first developing the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of literature. In terms of the type of literature, all academic literature was included such as journal articles, books, book chapters, and reports as well as literature of a more 'grey' nature such as reports, briefs, newsletters, websites, policy briefs, handbooks, manuals, published presentations, documentary films, etc. Literature of an empirical nature including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research, as well as literature of a more experiential or descriptive nature was included. The timeframe for publication was 2000 to current day (2019).

Based on the conceptual framework a keyword list was created including the following words, their variations and combinations: women's empowerment, collectives, unions, networks, think tanks, co-operatives, associations, organizations, civil society, movement, informal, informal work, leadership, capacity building, Africa, Asia, Latin America, South America, developing countries, and low-income. These were searched in the following databases: Web of Science, Proquest, Sage, Scholars Portal, JSTOR, and EBSCO (Africa-Wide Information and Gender Studies Database). Google Scholar was also employed for academic literature, and Google searches using the above keywords sought out the 'grey' literature. Specific international organizations were also searched, these included the Gates Foundation, WEIGO, ILO, SEWA, Streetnet, SIHA, Planeterra, New Internationalist, Guardian Global Development, and International Domestic Workers Federation. The search was conducted between March 2019 and May 2019.

Using the search criteria described, over 160 publications were collected. The literature then underwent an analysis process, which involved coding each publication based on the conceptual framework – the three-dimensional model of women's economic empowerment within the micro, meso, and macro dimensions (Huis, Hansen, Otten & Lensink, 2017; Malhotra and Schuler; 2005; CECI 2015; Oxfam Canada 2019; and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014). In addition to the conceptual framework, coding was based on emerging themes. By employing an iterative approach to the analysis of the publications on the intersection between economic empowerment and women's collectives, themes and processes surfaced. These are discussed in the Results section of this report.

Limitations of the study

In accordance with an evidence synthesis approach, the methodology was explicitly documented thus creating a search trail. This ensures replicability of the search, makes updates easier, and enables readers to be aware of any potential bias (Karlsson and Takahashi, 2017). Despite this attention to documentation, there are methodological limitations. The definition of economic empowerment that each article uses is not standardized or universal; how researchers and authors are applying and

measuring economic empowerment is therefore also not universal (Alonso-Poblaclón & Slar, 2018). Researcher bias may be present in terms of the literature search, inclusion, and analysis. Additionally, the body of literature that has been searched is in English; while articles reflect the experiences of women around the world, articles written in other languages have not been included. And finally, more often than not publications discuss economic empowerment opportunities; therefore, there is an internal bias towards presenting what works, not what fails, or what was tried and did not succeed (*ibid*).

Analysis

Although there is extensive literature on men, work, workers, workplaces, formal work, co-operatives, unions, NGOs, civil society, and social movements; this evidence synthesis focuses on the critical centre where the literature on women, informal workers, empowerment, WEE, collective action/collectivizing and collectives comes together. We call this critical centre 'collectivized women's economic empowerment'. It is organized into three sections: 1) women informal worker collectives; 2) collectivizing and women's empowerment within informal employment sector; and 3) the ecosystem for enabling women informal workers to collectivize. The enabling organizations, the mechanisms of collectivization, and the industry sectors that are modeling examples of collectivizing that supports women workers' economic empowerment including resources, agency, and achievements are discussed in relation to the conceptual framework of women's economic empowerment within the micro, meso, and macro dimensions.

1. Women Informal Worker Collectives

The literature expresses the full complement of definitions of a collective. One that works well with the understanding of collective action and can be used globally to encompass a range of organizing structures is: a non-hierarchical organization with each member having equal decision-making power. For the purposes of this evidence synthesis, women-led or women-positive collectives that (may) provide a high level of empowerment at the micro, meso, and/or macro dimensions via access to well-paid, safe work, an increased understanding of rights, and expanded voice are addressed.

Women informal worker collectives are founded using many different organizational structures and reflect the context in which they are founded including the sectors the women are working in, the landscape of the enabling ecosystem, and the different motivations and goals for collectivizing. They range along a spectrum of formality, which is defined by incorporation status, and the level of by-laws and procedures adopted by the organizational structure. The following describes the different types of collectives with Figure 2 providing a visual representation.

Unions

Unions are often highly formalized organizations. Women informal workers have organized their own unions, as in Ev-Ek-Sen in Turkey which is a home-based workers union, GEFONT a home-based workers union in Nepal, and Sikhula Sonke in South Africa that support farm workers. They have organized within current unions in order to create safe spaces and a voice for women within the mixed-gender work and union space.

Co-operatives

Equally as formalized are co-operatives that have a formal incorporation status; policies, by-laws, and constitution etc. are all determinants of formality. Some examples of collective organizing using the co-operative model are ASMARE, a wastepickers co-operative in Brazil; and a mixed-gender co-operative

called Yebo Rekopane Recycling formed by wastepickers in South Africa. Social enterprises, often incorporated as co-operatives, are an organizational structure that women informal workers are more recently turning to. The HWPRI Collection, for example, is a social enterprise selling handicrafts to tourists in Indonesia. NGOs – regional, national or international – often play the role of the enabling organization in women informal workers' collectivizing, but also can be a keystone for women workers. Such is the case with SEWA, which is not only an enabling organization for women workers in the home-based industries, but also helps to collectivize women informal workers in other piece work industries to form women-led co-operatives, NGOs, and regional groups. On the international level, the IDWF supports the collectivization of domestic workers.

Associations, Groups and Networks

Turning to the more informal side of the organizational structure spectrum, the literature discusses networks, self-help groups, and social or religious organizations/associations as ways of organizing women-led collectives. These include the many women-led and -founded community-based informal networks or groups that empower women informal workers to gain better and more secure jobs (Sinha & Mehrotra, 2016), to form childcare support systems (Clark, Kabiru, Laszlo, & Muthuri, 2017; Moussie & Alfers, 2018; Sengupta & Sachdeva, 2017; Simeu et al., 2017), and/or to find a collective voice around health, sanitary or safety issues in the community. Due to the more fluid and less formal nature of these types of collectives, there is less research and reporting available on their activities.

Collectives and Social Movements

It is clear that there is a symbiotic nature to social movements and women informal worker's collectives. In some cases, social movements have played an important role in creating an environment conducive to the emergence of women's informal worker collectives; in others, there is a blend of social movement and organized structure. In still other situations, women's informal worker collectives have spawned a social movement built on political action, advocacy, and public awareness building for decent work, rights for women workers, childcare, or safety in the workplace (de Volo, 2006a).
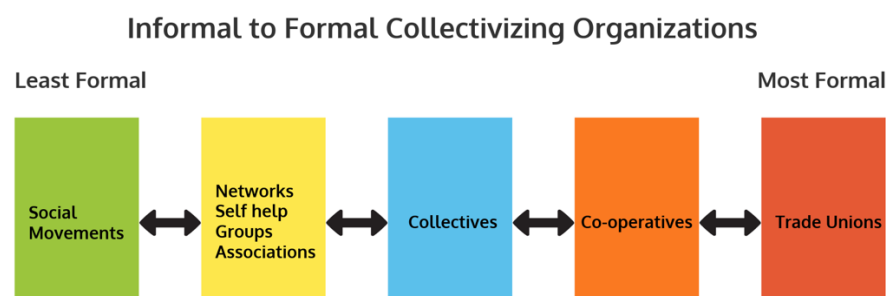
Figure 2 Least formal to most formal collectivizing organizations.

Women informal worker collectives can be independent structures or have a very close connection to an enabling organization grounded in a social movement (e.g., central organization and regional nodes, or enabling organization and social enterprise, or enabling organization and lobby organization). They can be informal or formal structures (e.g., informal networks or incorporated co-operatives). They can be

embedded within another organization (e.g., women's committee as a sub-group of a trade union). Women informal workers can collectivize into gender-mixed collectives or into women-only collectives.

The next section looks at how these types of collectives work towards economic empowerment at the micro, meso, and macro dimensions including building agency among their members by: bringing workers together to find common areas of need; providing representation on behalf of the members; developing a collective and visible voice to workers' needs; and by enabling worker development through leadership training and opportunities (Bonner, n.d.-e, n.d.-a, n.d.-d, n.d.-c, n.d.-b; Bonner & Spooner, 2012; Collins, 2007; Spooner & Mather, 2012).

2. Collectivizing and Empowerment within Informal Employment Sectors

Of the many types of informal employment, women tend to be over-represented among domestic workers, home-based workers, waste pickers, street venders, and sex workers. For this study we looked at features from the aforementioned sectors as well as, fishing and agriculture. Within the sectors we sought out examples of collectivizing for women's economic empowerment. A common theme within the women informal worker literature is to make visible the invisible by recognizing both the work that is being done by women in the informal sector and their status as workers.

Domestic Workers

Women engaged in informal and insecure work are not protected by labour laws, allowing them to be easily commodified by nefarious elements. The invisible nature of domestic work in private homes has made women particularly vulnerable to modern day slavery (Klovborg, 2019; ILO 2017a). Domestic workers (DW) collectivizing creates visibility for women informal workers thereby reducing the entry points for their exploitation. The Indonesia's Rap program is an example of a DW-led collectivizing initiative. The program was developed by the National Network for Domestic Workers Advocacy (Jaringan Nasional Advokasi Perkerja Rumah Tangga) JALA PRT, a network that only accepts women as members and leaders. The premise of Rap is to develop DWs as organizing leaders to ensure that leadership and skills are built from the ground up to create a sustainable structure that will increase the capacity of DWs as the program expands. Having a critical awareness of issues is crucial for rapper leaders to be able to foster deep and committed engagement with isolated, vulnerable DW recruits. The Rap program provided the leadership training and issues awareness, which increased the agency of DW rappers resulting in high numbers (from 131 to 611) of new DW members being recruited (ILO 2017a).

In Kenya, the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotel, Educational Institution, Hospital, and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA) successfully increased its membership base from 20 to 20,000 within six years using a locally-based, worker-led organizing strategy. Local committees each selected strong, committed local DW leaders who would then coordinate all local recruiting, awareness raising, liaising with stakeholders, and develop "unity out the diversity of the workers" (ILO 2017b, p. 107). Organizing committees were eventually broken down into 100 households each and held weekly meetings on Sundays (typical day off for DWs) with each DW committed to bringing a new DW to the next meeting. Meetings are worker-led and include educational components about social issues (e.g., family planning) and DW issues (e.g., rights or negotiating contracts). Members contribute money weekly to fund a different DW to invest in a personal need (e.g., work clothes, livestock). They pay monthly fees, 50 per cent of which stays with their committee and 50 per cent goes to the country-level branch, with the members deciding which sector they want to fund (ILO 2017b). The KUDHEIHA case study, like Indonesia's Rap program, focuses on developing DW leadership and continues to build on the leadership and worker-led organizing

committees for sustainability and the growth they need to represent a strong, united voice to advocate for fair labour policies and practices in regional and national forums.

Home-based Workers

Home-based workers are individuals who work in their own homes on labour-intensive tasks that can range from textile work and parts assembly to clerical work (Spooner & Mather, 2012). Employment relationships also vary greatly with workers being contracted by employers, others selling their piece work to intermediaries, and some working and selling products independently (Ibid). The majority of the workers are women who are underpaid for their home-based work and have additional unpaid domestic/care work at home (Ibid). Like domestic workers, home-based workers face issues around visibility and low wages, but also "irregular work, delayed payments, and rejected goods" (Carr, 2016 p. 62). The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has made enormous strides in gaining rights for home-based workers in India and continues to organize and provide a collective voice for millions of home-based women workers. SEWA's organizing strategy works towards meeting workers' basic needs first, related to dealing with lack of infrastructure and basic services in women's homes; providing skills training to help improve working environment; and identity as workers (cards) for more individual bargaining power. Members are connected with over 50 co-operatives across India; and provided with opportunities to network and participate in decision-making within their Trade Committee (home-based workers). SEWA has become a social movement in its own right, encouraging women through leadership training, changing cultural norms, and influencing policy and practices at region, municipal and local levels (Bonner and Spoon, 2012; SEWA 2009).

Waste Pickers

Waste pickers provide solid waste collection in various cities around the world sustaining their livelihoods by reselling or making personal use of recyclable materials (Dias & Samson, 2016). Collectives working with waste pickers assist in building self-esteem and an identity as a worker, along with trade-related skills-building and leadership training.

Waste pickers in Colombia have been organized since the 1980s,"the only country in Latin America that constitutionally protects the rights of waste pickers to carry out their work" (Noriega, 2017). The legal protection of rights came because informal workers as a collective learned about and demanded their rights for safe workplaces, better pay, and more secure employment. This translates into economic empowerment at individual, relational and social levels for the women who lead and are worker members of recycling co-operatives and associations. Women waste pickers often had mothers who were waste pickers and they began their work as children working alongside their siblings (Noriega, 2017). The intergenerational aspect of this sector provides an especially poignant comment regarding collectivized women economic empowerment. The women waste pickers of today continue to build on the collectivizing work of their mothers and grandmothers. While waste pickers are still struggling for improved conditions, there is a sense of pride in the collective identity of being a waste picker.

Street Vendors

Street vendors are mobile salespeople who provide street level access to a wide range of goods and services in the public spaces of cities around the world (Roever, 2014, p. 1). Issues facing street vendors include accessing public space to sell goods; acquiring a secure location for storing sales cart and merchandise; acquiring a bank account; and acquiring a vendor's permit (if available). Not surprisingly, women street vendors tend to be underrepresented in leadership roles.

StreetNet International is a network in support of street vendors that was established in the early 2000s with the support of WIEGO and informed by SEWA's 1995 international meeting of street vendors. Part of StreetNet's mandate is to address representation and leadership of women vendors. Their constitution requires 50 per cent quota of women for all decision-making bodies at all levels - including the International Council and its executive. This in turn has encouraged street vendor member organizations to adapt their own gender policies and develop women leadership, to varying degrees (Bonner and Spooner, 2012).

Women street vendors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have united within the League for Defence of Congolese Women (LDFC) to collectivize themselves in order to challenge daily discrimination and harassment within the context of ongoing conflict, violence, and poverty. Collectivizing has helped women street vendors in the DRC acquire some legitimacy via permits and permissions. The collective has also helped the women develop a micro-finance network through monthly contributions to a collective fund. The money then can be loaned out to individual women for one-month terms to provide them with working capital (Bonner and Spooner, 2012).

Sex Workers
Despite sex work's reputation as being one of the most exploitative industries, collectives have played a tremendous role in bringing economic empowerment in all dimensions to women working in the sex trade. The Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP) is a membership organization with over 305 organizational memberships in 85 countries. One of the key goals of NSWP is to support empowerment of sex workers at the macro dimension by providing capacity-building and leadership opportunities for meaningful involvement in policy development and programming through the Sex Worker Implementation Tool (SWIT) (NWSP, 2018).

Another example of the power of collectives is India's Durbar, a collective of 75,000 sex workers across the West Bengal region, founded in 1995 and led by sex workers and their children. The collective's goal is to strengthen the rights of sex workers and reduce the stigma they face. They focus on multiple goals: fighting against unfair legislation that makes work more difficult and dangerous; ensuring that their children are safe, educated, and free from discrimination; and having access to banking, health care, and skills-training. Workers and their children have a sense of pride in their worker identity, and with this strong sense of identity they are able to demand that their rights be upheld (Amnesty International, 2016). The Durbar Collective is able to effectively mobilize thousands of workers to protest unfair legislation. Committees of sex workers provide peer-to-peer training on health, safety, and legal issues, and the formation of a credit union has enabled sex workers to save money, pay for children's education and health care, or to start small new businesses (as a retirement plan as they age out of sex work)(*Ibid*).

Fisherfolk Workers
Half of all workers in the seafood industry are women. An even higher percentage of those women work in subsistence aquiculture, fish processing, trading and retail, administrative positions, and within environmental organizations. Very few women, however, are in leadership positions within the fishing industry (Monofort, 2015). At the international level, the enabling organizations ICSF, the WFFP and the WFF are advocating to increase the visibility of fisherwomen. The ICSF Women in Fisheries program promotes women's participation and leadership in fisheries globally and connects them to initiatives at national and international levels (Nayak, Quist, Maneschy, Perri, & Sunde, 2016).

Rwanda's Project Pêche is an example of a fishing co-operative with women workers at every level of the operation - catching the fish, drying the fish, transporting the fish, and selling the fish to markets across Rwanda. There are 87 women and their families supported by the co-operative. The women are proud to be self-sufficient, to be able to fish, negotiate fair prices for their catch, and work co-operatively with other women in the industry (Sims, 2018).

Small-scale Agriculture Workers

Women supply upwards of 70 per cent of all agricultural labour in developing countries (Fairtrade International, 2015). Challenges to supporting women workers in agriculture centre around their access to land and limited access to equipment, seeds, credits, and family services (Cuellar-Gómez, 2008; Duguid & Weber, 2016). AMUCC is a co-operative of women coffee producers in El Tambo, Cauca, Colombia, supported by an enabling organization in the form of a Spanish coffee company SUPRACAFÉ. SUPRACAFÉ is part of a social enterprise initiative called Business Call to Action with a goal to progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals via companies developing business models that engage people with lower socioeconomic status (BCtA, 2018). As a result of organizing into the AMUCC co-operative the women members have developed into skilled, confident workers in the coffee trade, who are able to network with women from other municipalities, and compete with other coffee producers for regional, national, and international markets (Cuellar-Gómez, 2008). Being able to navigate the international commodity world for women coffee producer has only been possible because of the economic empowerment gained through the collective.

3. Ecosystem for Enabling Women Informal Workers to Collectivize

Much of the literature focusses on what is needed in order to enable women informal workers to collectivize (see Figure 3). A number of elements need to be present in order for collectivized women's economic empowerment to occur. First, women informal workers have to be able to collectivize; second, the collectivizing process for both the individual informal workers and for the collective itself needs to be fostered; and third, the fostering of WEE in terms of resources and agency needs to be fore-fronted by the collective.
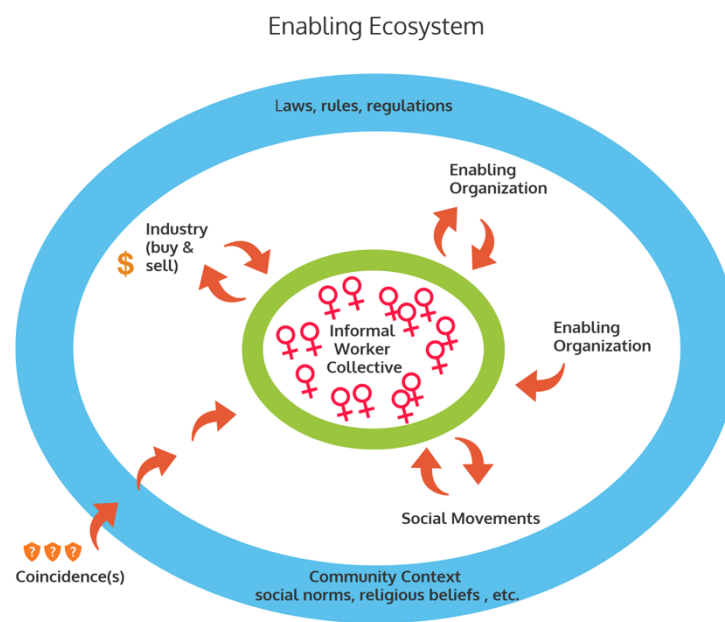

Figure 3 Enabling Environment for development of women informal workers' collectives.

There are many moving parts needed to create an enabling ecosystem for women informal workers to collectivize. The community context – the cultural, social, and religious norms – factor into an enabling ecosystem for women informal workers collectivization and are very much dependent on each geographic community. Whether deemed pro-collectivization or not, these norms can encourage or discourage women informal workers to collectivize or to participate in formal work. The policies, laws and regulations of the various orders of government highly affect the encouragement, backing and success of collective action and collectivizing. The jurisdiction may be community-level or regional (e.g., passing of waste bylaws for the city), national (e.g., pay equity laws based on gender), or international (e.g., passing ILO decent work conventions). The ability for collectives to start, survive or thrive can hinge on the policies, laws and regulations as defined by different orders of government (Madhok, 2003). The sectors (buy and sell) in which women informal workers are working (as discussed above) play an important role. Due to the informal, thus precarious nature, of their work, women need to be attentive to the buying and selling of their goods or services and the money they make. This means the collective always has to be attentive to improving acquisition and sales supports for their members (Sinha & Mehrotra, 2016).

The organizations that enable and actively support the collectivization of women working in the informal work sector are varied. From the literature, enabling organizations are expressed as a number of organizational structures including: trade unions (e.g., International Domestic Workers Federation, CECAM, KFAT), networks (e.g., Tshwane Network, VAMP), associations (e.g., SEWA, NASVI), international organizations (e.g., WEIGO, StreetNet, OXFAM, IDWF), and non-governmental organizations (e.g., Organization for Educational Resources and Training). Some enabling organizations are women informal worker collectives themselves, some have chapters based on region or community, some have spin-off organizations of different organizational structures for women to join, some help women establish their own collective. For

Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing & Organizing (WIEGO)

WIEGO is a global network focused on securing livelihoods for the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. Key to this is the belief that all workers should have equal economic opportunities and rights. To date WIEGO has 211 individual and institutional members, with supporting activists, researchers, and development practitioners, in over 40 countries. WIEGO plays an important role in the ecosystem supporting women informal workers to collectivize. As an enabling organization they are helping:

- to put issues of informal workers at the centre of development discourse, policies and processes relating to growth and poverty;
- to investigate and increase understanding of the size, composition and contribution of the informal economy and of the status, needs and constraints of informal workers;
- to increase understanding of how the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy are linked to the formal economy and inserted into the global economy; and
- to promote appropriate and equitable policies, laws, regulations and institutions that can improve and secure the livelihoods of the working poor in the informal economy.

WIEGO does this through developing membership-based organizations (e.g., trade unions and cooperatives); through capacity building of women informal workers and the support of new leaders; implementing data collection and analysis of trends and supports needed; launching a law program to improve legal and regulatory frameworks; investigating the role of social protection of women informal workers at high risk times (e.g., natural disasters) and in high risks sectors; and enhancing the capacity of women informal workers to shape the urban policies and environment in which they work and live (WIEGO, 2019).

example, Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) trade union has spanned the SWaCH co-operative in Pune, India to support waste pickers; VAMP, also in India, was created to support sex workers and has created units in different cities. Importantly, there is no one model for supporting the collectivization process. Leaders and women informal workers are best suited to finding the expression of collectivizing that works for themselves within their geographic and cultural communities, and their sector.

What the literature also shows are the important roles enabling organizations have in the support of the development of a collective (Fudge & Hobben, 2018). The roles include initial conscientizing of women informal workers and conceptualizing of what they could collectively create, thus supporting micro economic empowerment. Enabling organizations provide practical or technical support, funding, and models of organizing; as is the case for women's social networks in Catalon Pyrenees, where they supported the developed of new women-led businesses (Pallares-Barbera & Casellas, 2019). This form of meso empowerment is essential in movement building. Enabling organizations can provide safe spaces for women, and training/ education (meso empowerment). Enabling organizations are also mentors, examples, and inspirations to individual women informal workers and to fledgling collectives building macro empowerment through collective achievements.

The outlier in the enabling ecosystem is the role of coincidence ((Alonso-Poblaclón & Slar, 2018). Coincidence is when something (or things) provides the catalyst or opens up the opportunity for the collectivizing process to start/ grow/ mature despite other elements not being favourable. For example, a natural disaster or charismatic leader or bylaw loophole emerging/coming together to create the opportunity for collectivizing to flourish. While this is not an asset, it can factor in when looking back at the collectivizing process or should be looked for to open the door to collectivize.

In an article summarizing a multi-country, multi-year development programme, Andrea Cornwall identified "there are no one-size-fits-all interventions that can produce in all women the effect of feeling more control over their lives" (2016, p.347). Hand in hand with this, she affirms success is when "empowerment initiatives include a dimension to actively engage women in critical, conscious, reflection on their own circumstances and to share that process with other women" (*Ibid).* This can be said of enabling ecosystems as well; the starting point is critical consciousness of their individual and collective plight, thus working on all dimensions – micro, meso, and macro – of economic empowerment.

Discussion

The goal of this evidence synthesis is to answer the question: **How does women informal worker's participation in various types of collectives intersect with increases in their empowerment?** The following are highlights from the literature.

Much of the grey literature focusses on what is needed in order to enable women informal workers to collectivize. There are many guidebooks and manuals produced by enabling organizations to support women informal workers to collectivize. These are of a practical and technical nature. They focus on individual women workers as well as fledging collectives and networks of collectives. The literature drives home the reasons for and the motivations to collectivize. There has been substantial research and personal narrative gathering on the plight of women informal workers and why they should collectivize. There is also a substantial body of literature that focuses on what women informal workers will obtain if they collectivize, with many good examples and case studies of women collectives highlighting their

successes and sometimes challenges or barriers. The number of meta-studies across countries, sectors, or literature are few. While there are many empirical studies on women informal workers collectives, most take the form of a case study. Some of the studies focus on empowerment / economic empowerment and some measure empowerment, but a consistent definition of, or scale to measure empowerment or economic empowerment was not present in the literature.

The next section brings the conceptual framework together with women informal worker collectives' highlights to discuss collectivized women economic empowerment (CWEE). Throughout the document the attention has been on the micro, meso and macro dimensions of economic empowerment; the following discussion will include the elements of resources, agency and achievements within each of the dimensions.

Micro-dimension Collective Economic Empowerment

Practical Needs
The need to address women's practical, daily needs (e.g., child care, violence, health) before moving on to issues particular to employment was common among the literature. What is evident is that women workers, particularly the majority of whom are informal workers, need support with care (Kabeer et al, 2013; Moussie & Alfers, 2018). These basic needs being met can be seen as resources that will support women's agency within the micro dimension (e.g., self-esteem, sense of efficacy, etc.) as she gains a sense of control over issues that immediately affect her. In many contexts, but especially those in which women are subsisting, collectives are founded on their ability first and foremost to help with practical needs, as well as improved working conditions.

Local and Soft Solutions
The focus of the collectives on local and soft solutions being employed at start-up helps individual members to understand why they are there and that they can access immediate benefits. Individual cost of participation must exceed the instrumental benefit (de Volo, 2006b) or otherwise women feel a participation dilemma – they would like to put their time towards participating but they need to make money for their families. The extended foundational or introductory period of collectivizing is continually repeated in order to keep extending out to the hard to reach, isolated, and marginalized women working in the informal sector. Discussions addressing the multiple barriers women informal workers face must often precede any in-depth discussions of specified working conditions. At early stages of collectivizing, women in informal working sectors can benefit from an

Chira Island Women's Collective

The Chira Island Women's Collective was founded in order to address a number of issues on the Costa Rican island. One of the first drivers was that there was a lack of employment opportunities for women on the island. Women met to discuss the issues and to come up with projects. Over a period of years, many women left the collective, but the founding three remained and the most urgent issue for them was the destruction of the island's mangrove ecosystem. The island's population was dependent on fishing, which in turn was contingent on the health of the mangroves. Despite forceful disapproval from husbands and community, the women went ahead and trained to be custodians of the mangroves. Then, because there was no boat available to them, the women learned how to build a fibreglass boat, built one, and used it to give visitors tours of the mangroves. Enabling NGOs and universities supported the women's trainings and the construction of a lodge that they called La Amistad Ecolodge to conduct trainings and to house visitors. The men of the community apologized to the women, saying they should have valued them more and asking to join the collective. The leader, Liliana, immediately said no, she told them that the women would support them, but the men would have to form their own collective and undergo all the training the women had. The men formed the Chira Island Fisherman's Collective and they too have taken up the mantle of protecting the ecosystem through providing a collective voice on issues including implementing sustainable fishing practices (Quesada, 2014).

understanding of the law and awareness of their rights as women, citizens, workers, migrants, etc. Basic understandings of the responsibilities of state and government are resources that individual and collectivized workers can use to potentially gain better working conditions. Individual workers within a collective may experience an increased sense of agency in the form of self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy when able to use their knowledge of the law and their rights (resources) to gain better working conditions (achievement). The literature expressed that years can be spent in the foundational period before any conventional economic goals are addressed through the collectivizing process or collective. The more isolated and/or impoverished the context, the longer this introductory period will take and less likely that women will reach macro-social (leadership/policy) dimension of empowerment.

Worker Identity

As a precursor to collectivizing and as a result of the collectivization process, women informal workers become conscientized as a worker – a worker who has rights and needs that need to be met in the present and in the future. She is building her identity as a worker and through this identity her sense of agency allows her to take action towards improving her economic status. The collective is an important space for her to build a sense of individual agency.

A Collective "We"

Collective action is a process that often results in a collective organization being formed at some point; however, it is the process of collectivizing as much as the collective itself that is empowering for women informal workers. Publications highlight a collective identity-building process that is often sector-based, and that importantly creates a sense of "we" that requires communication, shared understandings and practice, recognition of common goals and emotional bonds (de Volo, 2006b). This involves addressing differences; before a collective identity can begin to develop, the divisions among women based on class, caste, race, legal status, and job status need to be bridged. The status of women experiencing more intersecting oppressions/barriers needs to be raised among the women while concurrently encouraging the growth / expansiveness of the collective, and the perspective that collective is an inherent strength rather than a diminishment of individual status and power (Kabeer et al, 2013). The understanding of "we" is crucial in the collectivizing process and essential to moving towards all dimensions of empowerment.

> A focus on enhancing women's assets and resources alone misses a crucial dimension of the process of empowerment in feminist economic empowerment initiatives: that which is wrought out of coming together with and spending time with others, in breaking with isolation, and in contesting the beliefs and expectations that perpetuate the injustice suffered by women living in poverty and working in low-income jobs.
>
> Cornwall, 2016, p.350

Meso-dimension Collective Economic Empowerment

Networks

Meso-relational economic empowerment is about relationships and how those relationships benefit women informal workers. Women informal worker networks in and of themselves are a meso-dimensional resource for women informal workers. Becoming a member of a network can be the first time that an informal woman worker has been able to view other women informal workers in the same sector as a potential support system rather than as competition for limited resources. Women informal workers' network, as mentioned in the previous section, will work towards meeting women's basic

needs and developing a sense of shared identity among women informal workers over and above perceived differences based on race, class, caste, or faith. This recognition of the 'other' as not only someone with shared needs, but as a potential ally and friend, is an outcome that can provide multiple benefits to women informal workers who may have few friends or family that they can rely on.

Financial Support

Within many collectives, women informal workers will pool their funds to create micro finance loans for the members to access working capital. This collective-generated resource that is created by and for the workers not only boosts individual working capacity, but increases the members sense of agency in that they have the self- and collective efficacy to provide financial support for themselves and to achieve their work and employment-related goals. Street vendors in the Democratic Republic of Congo, domestic workers in Kenya, and the Durbar sex worker collective in India are all examples of women informal worker collectives that provide micro-financing for the betterment of individual members via members pooling their funds.

Decision-making

An informal woman worker may have expanded opportunities to participate in decision-making bodies, starting with her own local committee, as is the case with the Kenyan domestic workers in KUDHEIHA (ILO 2017b), with possibilities to represent at other boards, committees, and networks. The trust and relationships that can be built within a collective are both resources (increased circle of support) and a means of increasing women's agency as she can carry the weight of the networks' collective voice when she negotiates for better wages for a fair price for goods. The increased agency in the form of confidence through the ability to make decisions and negotiate on one's own behalf can translate into expanded influence within the collective, within the community and among peers, and within the family structure (achievement).

> **The Women's Network of Lima**
>
> In Lima, Peru, over two-thirds of the street vendors are women, yet very few held leadership positions. The Women's Network of Lima was established to address this inequity in 2004 (Roever & Linares, 2010). The founding president of the Network, Gloria Solózano, had left her formal employment due to a lack of child care to work as a street vendor. Her plight – lack of child care – can be overcome by engaging in informal work and is a common reason why women turn to industries such as street vending. The goal of the Network was to "place women in leadership positions in other organizations"(*Ibid,* p. 2) and enable women to pursue their own economic needs. The primary goal of the Network was to support women worker empowerment at the macro level, and to ensure the inclusion of women's concerns on the regional and national level. The Network increased members capacity to "articulate their concerns and develop collective solutions" (*ibid*, p. 4). Micro dimensional empowerment supporting activities included workshops that focused on self-esteem, self-respect, and women's rights as workers. These supports transformed self-conceptions of women, with one member saying that she now viewed herself as a "micro-entrepreneur" and another member, who had been afraid to speak up at meetings, found the courage to voice her opinion at meetings with men (*Ibid*, p. 4). The Network also held income-generating workshops that were a train the trainer format, enabling meso level empowerment of the women to teach skills to others in their base organizations.

Macro-dimension Collective Economic Empowerment

Moving from through the empowerment dimensions

Many collectives, due to immediate, critical needs of the women informal workers, end up focussing on micro and meso dimensions of economic empowerment; not because of a lack of interest in the macro, but because women informal workers need to see the positive effects of the collective on their lives directly. The literature illuminates the embedded nature of economic empowerment for women informal workers through collectivization. Through becoming involved in collectives, individual women workers gain the ability to make an economic difference for their work lives through better pay and for their families through savings for school. Importantly, they realize the power of becoming "visible" and how loud voices become when demands are in a unified/collective voice. The opportunities for leadership and interactions with decision-makers, a worker's world view of what is available to her, and her rights as a worker become clearer, opening doors for economic changes.

SASANE

SASANE formed in 2007 by a group of human trafficking survivors who wished to form and organization that protected human trafficking survivors and was run by survivors. The objectives of the organization are to:

1. To eradicate human trafficking and re-integrate human trafficking survivors into the society as respected members

2. To increase women's access to justice and achieve systemic change within the legal system

The organization has two offices with guesthouses for international volunteers. From their locations in Kathmandu and Pokhara they reach out to ten mountain villages with four programs. Their Paralegal training program has trained 328 trafficking survivors as paralegals who are re-integrated into society with education and job skills, and leaders who understand their legal rights. As paralegals, survivors provide access to justice, free of charge to other survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence in different police stations of Nepal. The Sisterhood of Survivors program provides hospitality training and job opportunities to vulnerable girls with low-literacy. Survivors are trained as trekking and tourist guides and certified through Nepal Tourism and Training Centre. The School Awareness program educates school children in 60 public schools, on various aspects of trafficking, violence, policies and related laws to reduce the risk of being trafficked and exploited. Their Community Outreach program provides literacy skills to people in 10 working communities in remote villages, along with life skills training, health and hygiene awareness, and introduce income generating opportunities (Sasane, 2018).

Enabling Organizations

The enabling organizations that support through technical expertise, funding, and mentoring etc., play a vital role in providing practical help and inspiration to individual women informal workers and communities. They are an important resource for building collectivized women's economic empowerment. Enabling organizations often have the history and experience to know what will work in the community, region or industry in that area. They start small. The initial strategies are most effective if developed in the local context, with local input and decision-making, and with the intention of addressing local issues. The JALA PRT domestic worker collective in Indonesia focused on training domestic workers to organizing leaders, providing and supporting, repeated and ongoing opportunities for building leadership skills and participating in leadership roles (ILO 2017a).

Gender Equity Policies

Enabling organizations that uphold policies and regulations requiring gender parity in leadership are working towards making women informal workers in leadership

positions a norm. StreetNet's constitution requires that 50 per cent of all decision-making bodies, at all levels, are women (Bonner and Spooner, 2012). These kinds of legislative and policy changes, when enforced by enabling organizations create an environment in which smaller mixed member organizations are more likely to follow suit and normalize the equal participation of women in leadership roles. The enabling organization is the resource that can influence policies and practices to include women workers in leadership roles, resulting in increased voice and representation of the needs of women informal workers (agency) and reduced barriers and increased supports to women informal workers working conditions (achievements).

Scaling Up

An important aspect of the macro economic empowerment achievement is the ability to scale up (national) and federate (international). The networked system of collectives and enabling organizations are an important part of making visible invisible women informal workers. The importance of local, community-based enabling organizations to support and help women reach empowerment at the micro dimension is vital to further success in empowering women at the meso and macro dimensions, as well as growing their collective into a strong social movement for women's empowerment. These are economic empowerment achievements at the macro dimension.

Summary

As a body of literature the number of case studies of collectives, personal narratives of women informal workers, and collective organizing stories is truly inspiring. What is clear is that for empowerment there is no end game; economic empowerment is ongoing, relative, contested, and importantly shared within and across collectives and individual women informal workers. Also clearly demonstrated, women informal workers have benefited from collective action and the collectives they have created. The collectives they form (e.g., union, co-operative, network, self-help group, association etc.) reflect the needs of the women workers, the industry they are working in, the geographic community, and the enabling ecosystem surrounding them. There is no one size fits all for collective formation; however, through the development of collectives and the collectivizing process women informal workers do see increased economic empowerment.

Time and again the sense of agency women have gained through their involvement with the collective is transferred across their work space, their family dynamics, their communities, and often into transforming laws, rules or regulations in their work sector thus improving their economic status and future. Collectivized women workers are informing policy, transforming working practices, and tackling cultural, social and religious norms that are barriers to WEE. These achievements are possible and recognized because women informal workers have joined and formed collectives to magnify their actions and demands.

Economic empowerment strategies for all dimensions are found within women informal worker collectives. While the micro dimension is often addressed first, building on small, local successes has shown to give momentum to members and leaders within the collectives to work towards the meso and macro dimensions of economic empowerment. In all cases, the work and actions of individual workers and collectives are because the women see the benefit to collective action. They want to be agents of change in their economic and social lives.

Implications

Research

The critical centre bringing together literature on women informal workers, economic empowerment and collectives is ripe for further investigation. In particular the following should be pursued:

- The development of standardized definitions of women's economic empowerment
    - Identify activities and actions related to collectivizing and indicators and metrics regarding size, growth, constituents, format, and other relevant details
    - Need for national statistics on economic empowerment of women using standardized indicators and metrics
    - Need for more large scale studies spanning countries and sectors using standardized indicators and metrics
- Gender-disaggregated data about global, national, and regional employment more generally and gender disaggregated data about informal employment sector specifically
- Collectivizing women workers in regions where norms and social conditions are least favourable towards women - comparative social impact measurements with collectivizing in more favourable conditions
- Evaluation, assessment, ongoing data collection, and reporting training within collectives, by women informal workers for learning, growth, and increased ability to represent collective to peers and key institutions

Practice

In terms of practice – developing, supporting and fostering collectivized women's economic empowerment – the literature has highlighted:

- The need to collectivize or join a collective needs to come from the women informal workers
    - Enabling organizations need to start with a conscientizing and reflection process
    - Women informal workers need to develop identity as a workers with rights
    - Women informal workers need to shift to a "we", moving beyond the divisiveness of race, caste/class, faith and viewing other women informal workers as competition, to move into a space of collaboration and support
- Collectives need to fulfil basic needs first (e.g., child care, better pay, better hours, reduced stigma), these are also the economic benefits of participation (value-proposition) and ultimately micro and meso dimensions of empowerment
- Be aware of and open to unforeseen opportunities (rise of the coincidence) as potential enabler for collectivizing
- Start with natural, identified leaders among women informal workers to kick-start organizing / collectivizing. Work towards building leadership skills in all members, supporting and encouraging continual leadership opportunities and extensions into leadership positions in

decision-making groups in outside collectives and other organizations to build voice and recognition

Policy

Policy makers at the regional, national, and international levels need to continue the work of making visible of the invisible women informal workers through collectivization. Some areas and ideas that policy makers should consider are that:

- There is no one model as the collectivizing process, but there are many promising practices can be adapted (including above mentioned practices)
- An enabling ecosystem is imperative. This ecosystem in fluid and adaptive
  - Often the existence of an enabling environment is because of macro dimension economic empowerment of women informal workers, families, law makers
- There needs to be a regulatory system that enables women informal workers to participate in collectives and the collectivization process
- Enabling organizations and collectives need support to extend to the most vulnerable, isolated workers as a priority
  - Worker identity and recognition through badges, permits, uniforms, and other identifiers that legitimize the informal worker
  - Tracking system for informal workers in invisible or private working environments, e.g., private homes, to ensure safety and wellbeing of worker, and fair compensation for worker

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