

DISCUSSION PAPER

HOMEWORK, GENDER AND INEQUALITY IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS



JANUARY 2018
UN WOMEN



Acknowledgments:

This discussion paper is the result of collaboration between UN Women, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) and HomeNet South Asia Trust, under the overall supervision of Anuradha Seth, Policy Advisor, UN Women.

The paper was authored by Jenna Harvey. The team wishes to acknowledge the valuable comments and contributions received from the following colleagues: Martha Chen, International Coordinator, WIEGO; Shalini Sinha, Focal Cities Coordinator, WIEGO; Janhavi Dave, International Coordinator, HomeNet South Asia Trust; and Renana Jhabvala, National Coordinator, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

Special thanks to Mamadou Bobo Diallo for coordinating the production of this discussion paper. The team wishes to thank Gretchen Luchsinger for copy-editing and Dammsavage Inc. for designing the discussion paper.

The financial support from the Government of Switzerland through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is gratefully acknowledged.

Disclaimer:

This discussion paper is written to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development policy issues. The views and recommendations expressed are those of the contributors, noted in the Acknowledgements, and do not necessarily reflect the position of their respective organizations.

Design: Dammsavage Inc.

DISCUSSION PAPER

Homework, Gender and Inequality in Global Supply Chains



UN WOMEN

New York, January 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | |
|---|----|--|----|
| INTRODUCTION: HOMEWORK, INEQUALITY AND GENDER | 7 | IV. POLICY RESPONSES | 23 |
| CLARIFICATION OF THE TERM “HOMEWORKER” | 9 | Fostering Enterprise Development among Homeworkers | 23 |
| I. EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF HOMEWORK IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS | 11 | Inclusive Urban Planning and Practice | 24 |
| Reorganization of Global Production and the Proliferation of Homework | 11 | V. LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS | 25 |
| Nature of Insertion in Global Supply Chains | 12 | International Legal and Governance Frameworks | 25 |
| II. CHARACTERISTICS AND PREVALENCE OF HOMEWORK | 14 | ILO Convention 177 on Home Work | 25 |
| Characteristics of Homeworkers and Links with Gender and Poverty | 14 | ILO Decent Work Agenda | 26 |
| Prevalence of Homework | 15 | UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights | 27 |
| III. WORKING CONDITIONS OF HOMEWORKERS IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS | 19 | OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear Sector | 28 |
| Transnational Studies of Homeworkers | 19 | National Legal Frameworks | 28 |
| Women Working Worldwide. Transnational Research on the Garment Industry | 19 | Thailand Homeworkers Protection Act and Social Protection Scheme | 28 |
| WIEGO Informal Economy Monitoring Study | 19 | Australia Homeworker Legislation | 29 |
| HomeNet South Asia Study in India and Nepal | 21 | VI. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY | 31 |
| Five-Country Survey in Southern and South-eastern Asia | 21 | VII. HOMEWORKERS, ORGANIZING AND AGENCY | 33 |
| National Studies | 22 | Existing and Potential Organizing and Collective Action Strategies of Homeworkers | 33 |
| | | VIII. CONCLUSIONS: CONSENSUS, GAPS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH | 35 |
| | | REFERENCES | 40 |

INTRODUCTION

Homework, Inequality and Gender

In many of today's domestic and global supply chains, a critical part of production is carried out below the factory floor by an invisible workforce – homeworkers.¹ It is estimated that in India alone, there are 5 million homeworkers contributing to garment and textile supply chains (Chen and Sinha 2016). Homeworkers are workers who are subcontracted to produce or add value to goods or services from their homes or areas around their homes. They are positioned at the end of what have become increasingly complex supply chains that connect factories, contractors, subcontractors, homes and workshops across the globe on highly unequal terms.

Despite the economic contributions of homeworkers to global production, their work and contributions to economic growth are largely unknown to, or undervalued by, the brands they produce for. The same applies to consumers and governments. By nature of their work, homeworkers are isolated and often lack information about markets or other homeworkers. As a result, homeworkers themselves are often unaware of their numbers and economic contributions, and do not view themselves as legitimate economic agents.

Shifts in the organization of global production over approximately the past 60 years have increased competition and the mobility of capital, and decreased worker protections and power, setting in motion an “informalization” process (Mehrotra and Biggeri 2007). In this process, working conditions and protections for formal workers have deteriorated and the

informal workforce has increased in size² (Delaney 2004). In 2002, the International Labour Organization (ILO) stated that the “bulk of new employment in recent years, particularly in developing and transition countries, has been in the informal economy” (ILO 2002:1). Rather than disappearing with industrialization,³ informal work has both expanded and emerged in new forms – for example, accompanying the growth of large manufacturing firms in the global South has been the emergence of informal enterprises and subcontracted industrial outworkers (homeworkers) (Carr et al. 2000; ILO 2002; ILO and WIEGO 2013).

Homework, a form of informal work, is characterized by vulnerability – homeworkers lack social and legal protections, and opportunities for economic mobility and collective bargaining – all four pillars of the decent work agenda outlined by the ILO (ILO 2002; Chen and Sinha 2016). Chen and Sinha (2016) outline three major ways in which homeworkers are inserted

¹ Home-based workers are workers who produce goods or provide services from their homes or areas around their homes. The term “homeworker” is used to refer to one category of home-based workers – those who are subcontracted rather than self-employed. Throughout this paper, the term “homeworker” is used except when reference is made to a study that uses the umbrella term home-based workers.

² Estimates by Charmes (2012) indicate that informal employment as a share of total non-agricultural employment increased for Northern Africa, Latin America, and Southern and South-eastern Asia from the 1970s–1980s to 2005–2010. For sub-Saharan Africa, informal employment as a share of total non-agricultural employment increased sharply from 67.3 per cent in 1980–1984 to 86.9 per cent in 1995–1999. It subsequently decreased to 65.9 per cent in 2005–2010.

³ For more on the view that the informal sector would disappear with modern industrial development, see Lewis 1954.

into global supply chains on unfair terms. First, firms outsource production to them as a way to protect against the risk of fluctuating demand (drawing upon homeworkers' labour when demand is high, and ceasing to do so when demand is low). Firms also outsource to homeworkers as a way to download the non-wage costs of production, as homeworkers supply many of these at their own expense, including a workplace, electricity, equipment and transportation. Finally, many firms use homeworkers because they have specialized skills that cannot be mechanized – such as intricate embroidering. In many ways, homeworkers epitomize the unequal landscape of global production – formal firms benefit from the skills and flexibility they provide, while denying them core labour rights.

Homework is highly gendered – although data on homework are scarce, there is a strong consensus in the literature that the majority of homeworkers are women.⁴ Existing data from Southern Asia⁵ show that homework accounts for a larger share of employment for women workers outside of agriculture than for men in the region. Many women take on homework because of constraints that relate directly to gender norms – including those that limit women's mobility outside of the home, or that assign disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work to women.

In this sense, reducing the decent work deficits that homeworkers experience is an issue of both economic and gender justice. A key challenge for policymakers and others interested in women's economic empowerment is to find ways to reduce the vulnerabilities that homeworkers face, and at the same time

on homeworkers in global supply chains with these challenges in mind.

Specifically, this paper reviews literature on homeworkers in global supply chains from 2000 to 2017. Although scholars started paying increased attention to homework as early as the 1980s, it wasn't until the 2000s that informal work generally, and homework specifically, began to be examined in the context of global supply chains (Meagher 2013). Still, work on homeworkers' conditions within global supply chains remains a very small and limited subset of a large and comprehensive body of literature on formal (particularly factory) workers' conditions in global supply chains. Similarly, within the larger body of literature on the informal economy, homework occupies a relatively small space.

In recent years, however, this disparity has begun to close, with much of the new research on homeworkers being commissioned or led by international agencies, activist scholars, civil society organizations or these actors in collaboration with each other. As a result, much of this review highlights applied case studies with associated lessons and recommendations for policy and practice, rather than theoretical debates and trends within the academic literature.

This review⁶ was guided by the following questions: What are the vulnerabilities of homeworkers in global supply chains? What mechanisms exist to provide legal and social protections for homeworkers and to secure their livelihoods? How have homeworkers made gains through organizing and agency, and what challenges do they continue to face in this

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_22005

