

Parenting Support for Informal Workers

Analysis and Recommendations for Parenting Programs to Meet the Needs of Parents in the Informal Economy

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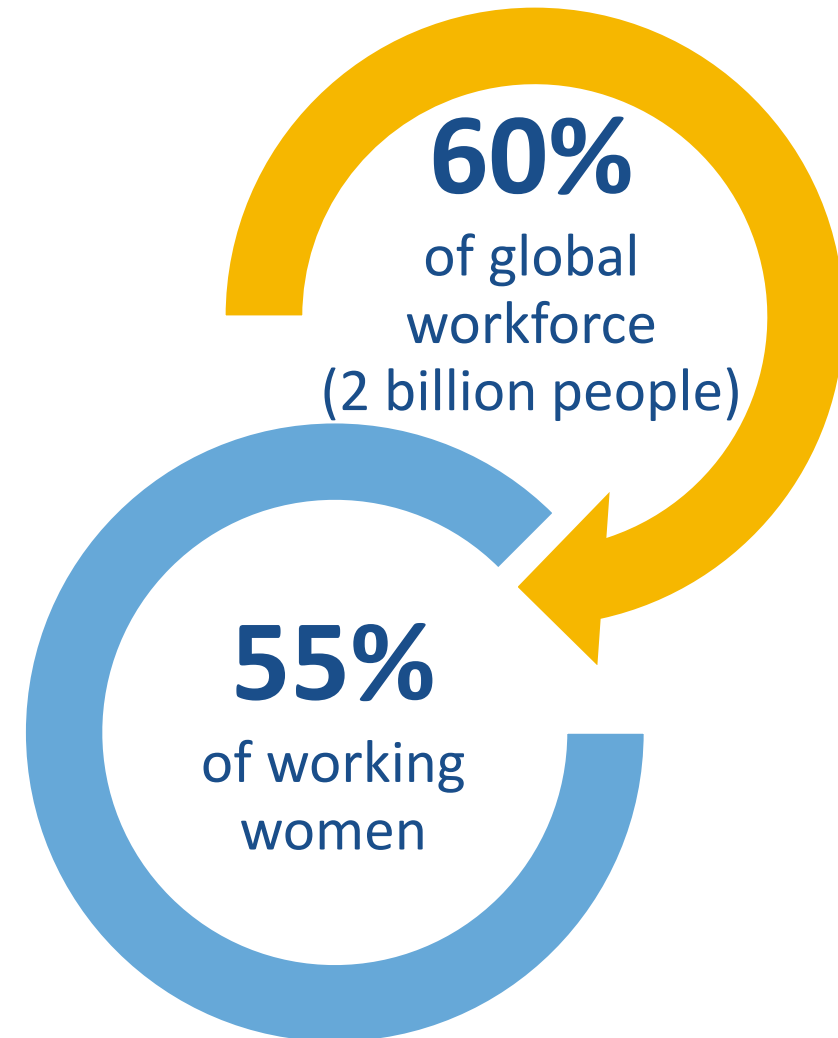
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Who Are Informal Workers?



Rationale

- Characterised by unregulated working hours, low and irregular earnings, lack of labor and social protections
- Higher concentrations of informal workers throughout Global South with limited childcare services
- Continued growth of informal economy battling growing threat of climate change



Project Scope



Objectives:

- Increase understanding of informal work and its implication on caregiving practices
- Review how parenting programs can be strengthened to meet the needs of informal workers

Research questions:

- How is informal work defined?
- What are the unique caregiving challenges faced by the parents of this particularly vulnerable group?
- What are the broader implications of their working conditions on childcare activities and responsibilities?
- What are examples of promising practices for providing parenting support to informal workers?

Informal Work and Barriers to Parenting



Types of Informal Work and Challenges

Context	Examples	Caregiving Challenges
Static customer-based	Street vendors, market traders, hairdressers, accommodation and food services workers	• Balancing customers & childcare • Inadequate shelter
Home-based	Piece-rate workers, tailors, artisans, home-based childcare providers, domestic workers (cleaners, cooks, housekeepers, gardeners, nannies)	• Decreased productivity • Lack of free play space for child • Exposure to harmful objects
Mixed-site or multi-site	Street performers, repair workers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians	• Unpredictable, inconsistent work • Travel to various worksites
Agricultural	Small farmers, seasonal workers, fishermen	• Exposure to toxic elements • Long hours of physical labor
Industrial location-based	Construction workers, mining, brick layers, day laborers, factory/garment workers, subcontracted laborers	• Hazardous work environment • Low chances of childcare nearby • Long hours of physical labor
Workers on the move	Waste pickers, scrap collectors, porters (cleaners), head loaders, delivery drivers	• Constantly moving • High unpredictability & lack of safety
Center-based	Community health workers, center-based childcare workers	• Must monitor multiple children • Age-range might not be suitable

Strategies for Supporting Informal Workers



1. Establish childcare services in locations where informal workers gather
 - Pop-up childcare crates (South Africa), Mobile Creches (India, Burkina Faso)
2. Deliver parenting education in ways that fit informal worker schedules
 - Cuna Mas (Peru), Centros de Desarrollo Infantil (Colombia)
3. Develop flexible childcare models for unpredictable worker schedules
 - Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) childcare centers (India)
4. Integrate childcare services into workplace settings
 - Mothers@Work (Bangladesh), Mobile Creches (India, Burkina Faso)
5. Expand community-based childcare solutions
 - Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar (Community Welfare Homes), (Colombia)
 - Kidogo, Tiny Totos (Kenya)
6. Strengthen caregiver well-being and family support
 - Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) childcare centers (India)

Gaps in Support for Informal Workers

Limited coverage for highly mobile and seasonal workers

Inadequate nighttime and weekend childcare

Lack of inclusive support for domestic and home-based workers

Limited focus on fathers and male caregivers

Minimal integration of financial support for childcare

Lack of psychosocial and mental health support for parents

Recommendations for Strengthening Parenting Support for Informal Communities



Adapt to informal worker realities



Train local caregivers



Advocate for systemic change



Strengthen government and employer relationships



Keep it simple



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