

The Newsletter of  
Homeworkers Worldwide

Issue 3  
January 2008

# We Work At Home

European meeting in  
Istanbul

Turkish group organises  
for recognition

Thirty years of struggle  
in Madeira, Portugal



Embroidery work,  
Madeira



HomeWorkers  
**hww** Worldwide

## Organising For Rights

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## Editorial

More than ten years after the ILO adopted the Convention on Home Work (177) is a good time to assess how much progress has been made. So far, five governments have ratified: Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Albania and Argentina.

The Convention was important in giving international recognition to homeworkers and in some countries, ratification may have resulted in change. However, for many, the situation remains the same.

The Convention was also important because it was the first time that the ILO had adopted minimum standards for a workforce which was largely informal and unregulated. At the heart of its clauses, is the requirement for homeworkers to be treated equally to other workers.

The ILO went on to make the implementation of core labour standards a basic requirement for member governments.

Another important step has been taken by the ILO in discussions on informal work. It is now recognised that there are many workers in the informal economy, not only informal entrepreneurs. As workers, they are entitled to basic rights and protection. In the language of the ILO, they are entitled to Decent Work.

In 2008, it seems that the concept of Decent Work will be incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals which have set international targets for the reduction of poverty, but so far without acknowledging the central importance of employment.

So the last ten years has seen widespread recognition for informal workers and for the need for minimum labour standards for all workers, wherever they are working. There is still a long way to go to turn this recognition into real change. But more homebased workers are becoming organised, and hence visible, and are raising their voices to demand their rights. The coming year is bound to see more progress in this direction.

## European meeting, Istanbul

**From 4th to 7th November, participants from eight European countries came together in Istanbul, Turkey, for a meeting of the European Homeworking Group, organised by Homeworkers Worldwide.**

The meeting was hosted by Turkish homebased workers and of the twenty two organisations at the meeting, over half came from groups based in different parts of Turkey. Other organisations came from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Macedonia, Portugal - both Lisbon and the autonomous region of Madeira, Romania, Serbia and the United Kingdom.

the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to adopt the Convention on Home Work.

The meeting in November was an opportunity to expand the scope of the group, bringing in both the Turkish groups and some of those from the Balkan region who started working more recently with homebased workers.

Working in several different languages, we were able to reflect on organising experience, drawing on the wide range of local situations and strategies represented at the meeting and on advocacy work for the recognition and rights of homebased workers.



Most of those present represented women's organisations: homeworkers' associations or cooperatives or NGOs. The trade union of embroidery workers in Madeira sent two of their members, representing the largest group of organised homeworkers in Europe. On the last day of the meeting, two representatives of trade union federations of Turkey were also present.

Others taking part in the meeting came from alliances working on related issues: the European Contact Group, a broad alliance of church organisations; Clean Clothes Campaign; and Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organisation.

In the 1990s, the European Homeworking Group was active in the countries then members of the European Union. The group supported each other in developing strategies for organising and actively campaigned for

We were able to draw on the lessons of thirty years' struggle of the trade union in the embroidery industry in Madeira; the rich experience of women homebased workers in Turkey in their local groups and that of others from a variety of countries, associations, cooperatives campaigns and alliances, all working in different ways for the rights of homeworkers.

Guida Vieira, from the Union of Embroidery Workers, in Madeira, inspired everyone when she talked about the long fight for the rights of homeworkers. She said: "There are times when we laugh, and times when we cry. There are times when we are sad and think that the world will fall on our heads. But then we ask, if we give up now, who is going to gain? It is only the bosses who will gain. So we rely on our organisation, rely on each other and in this way we can transmit a sense of hope to others."

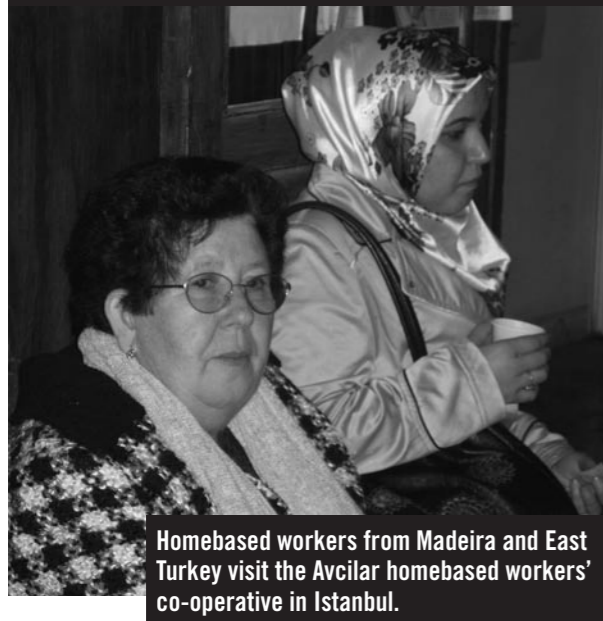
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HWW was established in 1999 to carry out activities in support of homebased workers around the world and co-ordinate work in Europe.

From 2000–2006, HWW received funding from UK Department of International Development (DfID) for projects in selected areas of Asia, Latin America and Europe. Other sources of funding include the Lipman-Miliband Trust (2006) and Sigrid Rausing Trust (2007). HWW also receives a grant to fund its participation in the Ethical Trading Initiative.

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## “We are Workers. We want Rights.”



Homebased workers from Madeira and East Turkey visit the Avcilar homebased workers' co-operative in Istanbul.

**T**here was much lively debate and discussion at the European meeting held in Istanbul in November. But ‘We are Workers. We want Rights.’ was a slogan that everyone agreed upon.

In the main sessions, two themes emerged and were discussed at length. Although the context varies from place to place, there are also common problems and solutions.

Firstly, there was extensive discussion about the type of organisation that was possible or appropriate for homebased workers. On the one hand, from Madeira, there was a clear example of a trade union which has fought for over thirty years for recognition of homeworkers and for their rights in theory and in practice. On the other hand, many people thought that at least in the early stages of organising, there were too many obstacles to forming a trade union. Although this was a long-term goal, the immediate aim was to form a cooperative or an association.

A particular debate was whether it is possible to combine in one organisation the aim of creating employment (finding contracts or markets) and fighting for rights. Some thought that the aim of organising, at least nationally or beyond the local-

ity, was for rights in the form of new legislation or programmes. Others thought that a key priority for many homeworkers was to find regular work, and for this cooperatives are a practical and democratic form of organising.

Others have organised as NGOs, focusing on advocacy and campaigning work rather than local organising, or as associations bringing together different groups of homebased workers.

The second main discussion was around social and employment protection. In general, homebased workers want to be recognised as workers and to receive the ‘equal treatment’ specified in the ILO Convention. In the short term, however, it may be better to focus campaigns and demands on a particular issue, such as the demand for minimum wages for dependent workers.

One of the first campaigns organised by the union in Madeira was for social security rights for homeworkers. They were successful in winning this after about five years and felt that this was a major victory for homeworkers. Other people spoke of the need for social insurance for times of ill health, old age and maternity.

While within Europe, we need to support whatever demands are taken up nationally by the different organisations, we can also focus a campaign on particular demands within the European Union which now has substantial powers over national legislation. Another possible campaign would be for the ratification of the ILO Convention throughout the European Union.

The debates will continue and we hope that there will be regular contacts and exchanges between all those who participated in the meeting, as well as with those in other countries not represented. While discussions go on, however, there is a strong agreement not only that homebased workers want rights but that “We contribute to the economy, and therefore we are entitled to rights.”

**“We contribute to the economy, and therefore we are entitled to rights.”**

## Statement of European Homeworking Group Istanbul, November 2007

**W**e, organizations of homebased workers and support organizations, reaffirmed our commitment to work to improve the lives of women homebased workers through support for democratic worker organization.

Women homebased workers have the right to organize in existing trade unions, set up new trade unions or other forms of organization such as associations or cooperatives, free of outside control or pressure.

We work in solidarity with all homebased workers, mainly women, working in different countries and sectors, rural and urban.

We support the demand of women homebased workers, whatever their employment relations or status, to recognition as workers, to the right to organize and for recognition of their organizations, and for representation.

We recognize the contribution made by homebased workers to the economy of their countries and will work towards wider recognition of this. We will work to raise the visibility of homebased workers and the value of their labour in all countries.

### Social Protection

We support the general demands of all homebased workers for full social protection and for equal treatment with other workers, as spelled out in the ILO Convention adopted in 1996.

In particular, as the European Homeworking Group;

We support active campaigns at national level in the different countries

We support the right of women homebased workers to earn enough to support themselves and their families and for protection and an income when they are sick, at times of maternity and in old age. We are committed to campaigning actively within Europe for these rights to become a reality.

### International campaign for homeworkers in leather footwear

We will work together with the international campaign in support of homeworkers in the leather footwear sector, with the main aim of building worker organization;

In Europe, we will build solidarity and exchange of information and experience between different groups of homeworkers in the sector;

We will build links between organizations of homeworkers and other workers’ organizations, particularly trade unions;

We will build links with consumer campaigns, women’s organizations and all those who support the demands of homeworkers;

We will continue to map the chains of production, both within Europe and internationally.

We will raise public awareness of the demands of homeworkers.

### Building stronger and wider links

We are committed to building stronger links and extending our network within the European region, while also recognizing we are part of a wider, international movement of women homebased workers.

We will communicate actively and overcome language and other barriers to exchange of information;

We are committed to building alliances with other worker organizations and all those supporting the movement of women workers for recognition, rights and social justice throughout the world.

**The Istanbul meeting was made possible by a grant from the *Fondation des Droits de L’Homme au Travail*. We are grateful for their support.**

## Turkey: Building Solidarity

Article: Gulsum Coskun

**A**s the representatives of the Women Homebased Workers Partners Committee of Turkey we want to send a message.

Organising homebased workers started in Turkey in 1994. But since 1999, the work went faster because of the existence of the Working Group on Women Homebased Workers which was able to work towards visibility and organisation. The Working Group has supported us in doing local mapping and have worked towards making a national organisation, HomeNet Turkey, a reality. They also supported all the different partners in trying to make homebased workers visible.

In all their work, the Working Group had the long-term aim of giving the responsibility of organising locally and nationally, to homebased workers themselves. This aim was finally realised in the partners' meeting held in November 2007 when it was decided that the homebased workers themselves should take responsibility for all the work.

1994 to 2007 was a long and important time for us. We are all homebased workers, women working for cash at home. Neither the work that we do in the home, nor the money that we earn from this work, have been visible.

We stitch clothes; cook tomato sauce and jam; sew beads to clothes, wedding dresses, bridal veils or night dresses; we do embroidery on clothes; assemble all the

pieces of pens and computers and electric cables; finish embroidered jeans; assemble parts of chandeliers; package sugar and spices.

In all this work, and many other tasks, we don't know who we are working for or who is the employer. All we know is that we often see the products that we make for sale in large shops on the high street.

Even when we are working for more than one boss every day, we do not know any of them. Yet women homebased workers are increasing day by day because of the low wages that are paid, let alone the non-payment of social insurance. The bosses never have to see their workers in this type of work. Perhaps they see the outside, the roof of the house, but they never look inside. They never see their workers.

We are trying to say that we are workers and we are trying to organize Turkey HomeNet. We collected signatures on a petition to the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, and they have replied to us. This reply itself implies recognition and has helped to make us visible.

Until recently, homebased workers were present in all meetings organised by the Working Group. There were many of these meetings, of different kinds: local workshops where homebased workers met with representatives of public authorities; monitoring meetings to follow-up from the initial meeting; national conferences which were held to work towards the

setting up of HomeNet Turkey; and partners' meetings where we decided our annual work plan.

In 2006, we decided to set up a new group called the Partners' Committee and this year, this Committee organised the annual meeting, as the representatives of women homebased workers. The 2007 partners' meeting was a turning point for us because the groups of women homebased workers have taken over all responsibility from the Working Group.

From now on, responsibility for all tasks – public monitoring meetings, the national conference, local workshops, annual planning meetings and membership of the international federation – are all our own. We have now made the decision to take charge of all this ourselves and to represent ourselves on all platforms. We do not want decisions made against our wishes when they are supposed to support us. We want to be truly supported and not told what to do.

We have had a lot of discussions amongst ourselves about what we want, how we can carry out these decisions, and what we can do. We think we can learn many things as we take on this responsibility, and in



National meeting in Ankara

fact, we have already learned a lot. Of course, there is a lot more work to do and the way is long. But we are determined to carry this out. We shall reach out to all the people who are homebased workers like us. We will have more discussions about our demands and policies at national level. We all want to unionise ourselves.

Our strength is based on women homebased workers and the work that we do with all our friends. We have to reach out to more people to improve our living standards. We have to work to improve our living

standards in both economic and social rights. We have to work. Our children want bread from us and they need education. However we are not recognised as workers. Our work is not visible. Just because we are a local organisation, this does not mean that we are uneducated or ignorant. We know our social rights and social life. But the value of our labour power is not recognised.

If there is a downturn in the national economy, we are the first group to be affected in a negative way because our husbands will be fired or forced to work for a low wage. We, homebased workers, will also be expected to work for less. We do not have any social rights.

Also, when we are older, we may be unable to work ourselves to earn money. After we reach fifty years old, we may be dependent on our husbands for money. For all these issues, we have no alternative but to organise. In addition to the local and national organising, for us international organization is very important. We have seen this in the European Homeworking Group meeting this year and as the Women Homebased Worker Group, we supported the recent meeting in Istanbul.

Representatives from other European organisations attended the last day of our own meeting and shared their experiences with us. Even though we have previously had some opportunities to meet with representatives from these groups, we had not met with all of them together before.

So this was an opportunity to meet all the organisations together and share experience. It was very good for us to listen to the many problems faced by homebased workers; the efforts that have been made to organise; and the solutions they have found or are still searching for. For example, the discussions with the Union of Embroidery Workers from Madeira, helped us to see the advantages of being a trade union in a new light.

We know that we have a long way to go and that there will be many difficulties. But when we heard how people from other countries have persisted, whatever the problems, it was inspiring for us.

We had an opportunity to discuss what we can do together in Europe and throughout the world. To sum up, the experience of meeting with others in the European meeting has given us strength in our local, national and international work.

# We are Workers, We Want Rights

## Homebased Workers are Entitled to Equal Treatment

### Employment Rights

- Minimum wages or a regular income
- Holiday pay and entitlement
- Health and safety at work
- Rights against unfair dismissal
- Rights against discrimination



Photo: Sharon Jones

### Full Employment and Social Protection? What Does this Mean?

*We all want full employment and social protection for homebased workers. These pages cover some examples of different types of rights, and cases where home-based workers have already made some progress.*

### Australia:

In Australia, homeworkers in the garment industry should receive the same employment and social rights as other workers. The trade union, the TCFUA works together with the Fair Wear campaign to ensure that employers implement this as spelled out in the Code of Practice. In many other countries, there is a law giving dependent homeworkers the same rights as other workers but no mechanism for its implementation.



### Social Security Rights

- Social Insurance for healthcare
- Maternity rights
- Retirement pension
- Unemployment benefit
- Accident benefit
- Benefit in the case of the death of a family member
- Child or family benefit
- Social assistance
- Insurance against disasters - natural or manmade
- Insurance for house, equipment and raw materials

### Brazil:

In Brazil and South Africa, old age pensions have been introduced as benefits for all those over a certain age living in poverty. This entitlement guarantees a minimum income and benefits the whole community.



### Tamilnadu, India:

In Tamilnadu, in the South of India, there is a special scheme for 'unorganised workers', including homebased workers. Homebased workers can register with the Manual Workers' Welfare Board, pay a joining fee and an annual subscription. In return, they are entitled to certain welfare benefits, whether they are working on their own account or as dependent workers.

### Madeira, Portugal:

In Madeira, an autonomous region of Portugal, homeworkers in the embroidery industry are covered by a specific social security scheme which gives them the right to full social security cover, including family and medical benefits, maternity rights and a retirement pension. This scheme was the result of a strong campaign organised by the trade union.

### Basic Services

- Medical services
- Housing
- Clean Water
- Education



Self help savings groups provide a minimum of social security to women in Jharkhand, India.

### Bidi Workers Welfare Board, India:

In India, homeworkers making local cigarettes (bidi) are covered by national legislation, if they can prove that they are workers. Trade unions like SEWA have organised thousands of bidi workers in the order that they can claim their entitlements. In addition to minimum wages, housing and healthcare schemes, bidi workers are entitled to scholarships for their children to go to school. The welfare fund is financed through a sales tax on the bidis.

## Women and homebased work in the Czech Republic

### A report by the European Contact Group



tended to experience poorer working conditions and lower pay, as they often worked on a piece rate. Knowledge-based workers were more likely to be paid an hourly rate and deal directly with the employer, rather than an intermediary. The report found that this was more important in determining conditions of work than whether or not work was formally registered.

The report explores the assertion that homebased work is a good way to combine work and family commitments. It suggests that many women in fact found they had more work and worse hours. Several women worked through the night having taken care of children all day, and continued to bear the burden of housework with little support from their husbands. Workers complained of feeling 'shut up' in their own homes: "the work gradually fills up my whole life and there is no time or opportunity for anything else" (Theodora, p17). Many of the women had found there were few alternatives to homebased work available to them or had experienced discrimination, for example being refused a job because they were 'too old'.

### Glass beading:

"The worker dips the metal rod in a special solution and lets it dry. Then she [melts] a glass rod over the burner... The rod is... propped up against the worker's head. She holds it with her left hand... she holds the metal rod in her right hand, winding [the] molten glass... The resulting glass bead... is then taken off and placed on a special pad to cool down. Once the glass is molten, the worker must work non-stop, as repeated glass heating is time-consuming." [Page 8] One worker had a large gas cylinder in her kitchen, there was no ventilation and it was not possible to open a window as the glass would have cracked. The worker complained of severe pain in her wrists, and felt she should have a fume cupboard to extract the fumes, but had been given no protection at all.

The report is based on research undertaken between 2005 and 2006 and is the first investigation of homebased work in the Czech Republic. Homebased workers are involved in a range of sectors, including: assembling date stamps, hair swatches for hair dye charts and babies' dummies, making glass beads, preparing food and putting inserts into magazines.

ECG found many of the problems faced by homebased workers around the world: no written contracts, irregular work, pressure to meet tight deadlines, low pay, and negative health impacts. Many workers were using homebased work to supplement benefits and saw their work as providing 'pocket



money'. Workers often did not have a clear picture of their workload or how low their rate of pay was until they were asked to work it out. The report finds that many of these disadvantages result from the invisibility of homebased work.

There were significant differences between manual and knowledge-based workers. Manual workers

## Thirty years of struggle in Madeira

Guida Viera told of how in the beginning their trade union only represented factory workers. In 1974, when she and others won the leadership of their union, there were only about 2,000 factory workers compared with the 34,000 homeworkers, most of them women in rural areas doing hand embroidery.

Guida explained how they went from door to door, travelling to remote villages, to talk to women and persuade them to join the union. Their first campaign was for social security. This took five years to win. But, she said, it was relatively easy since at that time embroidery made up 20% of the GNP of Ma-

deira. This encouraged many women to join and they went on to make a plan together to fight for other benefits.

But Guida emphasised the need for persistence. It took 11 years for them to get the employers to pay the cost of the embroidery thread; it took 20 years to win the right to unemployment benefit and 23 years to change the law so that women could retire at the age of 60.

Now the union is facing new problems because the embroidery industry has shrunk, with far smaller numbers working in the sector. The union has been taking part in trade fairs organised by the Madeira Institute of Embroidery to support the marketing of embroidery, especially for the promotion of new more modern designs. Maria Gananca has in the



deira. This encouraged many women to join and they went on to make a plan together to fight for other benefits.

She explained how they used every ally they could find. In the period immediately after the Revolution, priests were quite helpful and they would meet with women when they gathered at church services. Another group that proved helpful were bus drivers, who would carry messages to remote villages and even collect and bring back the women's union subscriptions.

At first the women's husbands were suspicious. They used to stand at the door when they had meetings to find out what was going on. However, when they saw the gains the union was making, particularly the social security benefits, they became enthusiastic and did what they could to help.

In 1979, the union held its first big demonstration to demand their rights. People said that women were going to make a new revolution. They saw that women knew what they wanted and were prepared to go for it.

last year travelled to New York, Italy, Paris and London to represent the union at these trade fairs. In a recent report, the union has concluded:

"The fact that an embroiderer was present, doing embroidery 'live' in person, helped customers understand the amount of time that it takes to make an order, for example a tablecloth."

It was an opportunity to learn that there is a market for high-priced goods: "Things went well in Paris too, and we saw that prices were not the reason why our embroidery does not sell. It could well be due to other factors, such as the designs, colours and the kind of articles that were displayed..."

Reflecting the union's main concerns, the report said: "It is necessary to present a high quality produce and this is increasingly difficult if no investments are made in human resources. It is not feasible to maintain the situation of paying low wages to these women because already only very few women know how to embroider and even fewer know all the stitches."

## 'Who Foots the Bill?' Campaign Update



**T**he meeting in Istanbul provided an opportunity for European groups to discuss footwear production and further develop the campaign. Homeworkers and their representatives from Bulgaria, Turkey, Portugal, Romania, Macedonia and the UK discussed their work and found that they were producing similar kinds of shoes, for national and international markets. Payments for the shoes were comparable across the different countries at around 0.30 Euros per pair. Work is becoming increasingly mobile, sometimes moving between countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, or out of Europe altogether, as workers in Portugal have found.

Workers expressed their anger at finding that the shoes they were making were sold for upwards of 40 Euros. They talked about the poor quality of the leather they were given, which often tears or is difficult to stitch - homeworkers are not paid for the time they spend on damaged pieces. They recognised that this means they are bearing the costs of the business risks associated with using poor-quality materials.

Workers also voiced their frustration about national laws and company codes of conduct that look good on paper but are not implemented and so make no difference to their lives. Some intermediaries are even trying to blame homeworkers for the fact that companies are not making the social security contributions required by law, and suggesting that the workers are therefore 'illegal'. Homeworkers in these circumstances feel constantly afraid and find it very difficult to demand better terms and conditions.

Participants at the discussion agreed that there was a need to build a network of footwear workers to continue to share information about conditions and supply chains. They committed to continue mapping work and collecting information on companies as well as building alliances with other workers and their organisations. They felt there was a need to raise public awareness about the issues. Key demands identified were: better pay; payment for damaged work where the leather tears because it is poor quality; better health and safety protection.



Making shoes in Hunan, China

## Watch this space:

Homeworkers Worldwide will be working with Labour Behind the Label (the UK arm of the Clean Clothes Campaign) on a series of campaign activities in the UK in early March 2008.

Get in touch if you would like to be involved - do you have stories to share? Can you organise activities in your country at the same time? Would you like us to send you campaign leaflets or other materials?

# SUBJECT TO STATUS

**T**wo members of the National Group on Homeworking (UK) attended the Istanbul meeting. They talked about their work with homeworkers and key findings of a major investigation into homeworking in the UK.

In the spring of 2007 the National Group on Homeworking conducted interviews with homeworkers across the UK, and the resulting report 'Subject to Status' offers a rare insight into their working lives.

In our research, the most common form of work homeworkers reported was sewing (23% of the sample). The next most common was packing and print finishing (22%), followed by delivery and distribution (10%).

Despite the introduction of the national minimum wage over 8 years ago, many homeworkers continue to receive scandalously low rates of pay. Most of the homeworkers (67%) were paid by piece rate, and for piece rate workers the average pay was £4.41 - well below the minimum wage. Some were earning as little as £1 per hour.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the top three concerns raised by homeworkers were irregular work, low pay and a lack of employment rights. One homeworker summed up the views of many when she said 'I feel that we should get proper rates of pay with employment rights and regular work. We are contributing to the local economy and should be valued and recognised for it.'

The problem of irregular work is a complex one, and at the very least employers could improve communication with homeworkers so they have

some idea what income to expect each week. Minimum wage law should address the problem of very low pay, but much more needs to be done to ensure it is enforced. With regard to employment rights however, the existing laws are part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Thousands of homeworkers in the UK are vulnerable to exploitation from unscrupulous employers, either because they do not have full employee status, or because their status is unclear. This means they miss out on employment rights such as sick pay, maternity leave, redundancy, pension rights and rights against unfair dismissal. 48% of the homeworkers we spoke to were not receiving any employment rights whatsoever. The law in this area is unclear and inadequate, providing a legal loophole for unscrupulous employers.

The report makes a number of recommendations to government, employers and trade unions which, if implemented, would make a huge difference to the working lives of homeworkers. A revision of the law on employment status is perhaps the single biggest step that could improve conditions for UK homeworkers, granting them the rights and respect they deserve.



## From Footballs to Embroidery



Photo: HomeNet Pakistan



Making cooler blinds

**The Aurat Foundation in Pakistan has published a series of newsletters documenting the range of homework done by women, with many photos, interviews and details of the pay and conditions of work.** They have also produced a bilingual - Urdu/English - edition of the text of the ILO Convention 177.

The photos and stories of the women workers show the great range of work being done at home: sewing frocks, doing embroidery for traditional salwar kameez, making kites, unravelling wool, threading beads, making shoes, filling matchboxes, doing embroidery on pillow cases and sheets, weaving blinds, making rotis, spinning thread, quilting, stitching footballs, stringing badminton racquets, packing tamarind, making paper garlands, pottery, sequin work, crochet, artificial jewellery and bangle making, peeling pine nuts, making carpets, rolling incense sticks and making sweets.

**“I started piece-rate work four years ago when my husband was laid off from his government job. Now I do whatever is available - sewing track pants, stringing badminton racquets. These days I am making footballs.”**

The articles demonstrate how women take on homework in order to cover basic household expenses, often including food. Even then, work is irregular and seasonal. Most women do multiple jobs, depending on what is available at different times. When no work is available, their families often go hungry.

Homework is not a marginal part of the economy. “The reality is that women homeworkers are part of a chain in manufacturing goods or providing services. The chain can be local or global but it is the homeworker who is most vulnerable to exploitation and gets the least reward for her input.”

The Aurat Foundation is coordinating HomeNet Pakistan which has four branches in Lahore, Quetta (Balochistan), Peshawar (North West Frontier Provinces) and Karachi. The aim of the newsletter is to make homework visible and to win recognition for the important contribution

made by women homebased workers.

As the authors point out: “We reward this large group of workers and producers, not by acknowledging them proudly, not by providing them facilities to reduce their labour and increase their incomes, but by pretending they do not exist or are invisible. This is the gravest injustice we can inflict upon them.”

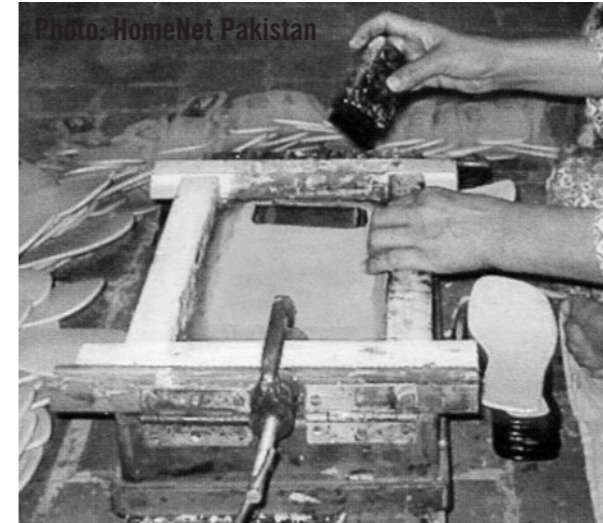


Photo: HomeNet Pakistan

**“..During the lean period, Shamim, Razia and Sadiqa also make shoes. They prefer the wedding season, thought the work is hard and Shamim suffers from backache and pain in her shoulders from sitting in an uncomfortable and unhealthy position for hours. The girls suffer too. However the work helps to save some money for their dowries. Sadiqa does not want to continue doing this work. “Despite working hard, we don’t earn enough to meet household expenses. I want to do something else in the future. I want to learn to read ...”**

**For more information, contact: HomeNet Pakistan, Room 11, 6-B LDA Garden View Apartments, Lawrence Road, Lahore 54000, Pakistan.**

## Action Alert

**Dutch human rights activists may face deportation to India.**

On December 1, the Bangalore magistrate court in India ordered the arrest of seven Dutch human rights activists from the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) and the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), who have been campaigning around labour rights in a jeans manufacturer supplying a company called G-star. CCC and Labour Behind the Label are asking people to write to G-star urgently asking them to guarantee freedom of speech and of association.

CCC argues that the seven activists are being targeted for their efforts to disseminate information about labour rights violations at the jeans manufacturer, Fibres and Fabrics International Pvt. Ltd. (FFI) and its subsidiary Jeans Knit Pvt. Ltd. (JKPL). The court has asked the India Ministry of Home Affairs to execute arrest warrants and request extradition of the Dutch nationals. The director of the internet service provider Antenna is also included in the request.

The CCC and ICN have been providing G-Star with information about labour rights violations at FFI/JKPL, where G-Star is the primary buyer, since 2005. To date, CCC finds that G-Star has not resolved the problems at FFI/JKPL, and argues that the factory is misusing the judicial system to censor and harass its critics.

Because they feel the situation is now extremely urgent, the CCC and ICN are now urging G-Star to suspend all future orders and works in the pipeline at FFI/JKPL until all court cases are withdrawn and a good-faith dialogue with the local union and labour rights organisations, focused on normalizing industrial relations and remediation of outstanding labour issues, has begun.

**For further information please contact the Clean Clothes Campaign: [www.cleanclothes.org](http://www.cleanclothes.org)**



HomeWorkers  
**hww** Worldwide

# Mapping Materials

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# 2008 Calendars

— *available now.*

## **PHOTO CALENDAR**

A5 format colour photo calendar. Fourteen colour photos of homebased workers in different countries.

## **KHATWA CALENDAR**

A5 format colour calendar with 13 prints of khatwa (applique) work from Adithi, India.

From 2001 to 2004, HWW carried out a mapping programme — a programme of action-research to support new organising of homebased workers. Work was done in parts of Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. A set of materials were developed in the course of this programme, to be translated and adapted for local conditions. These materials have now been developed and are available in paper or electronic form:

## **THE MAPPING PACK**

Basic guidelines for action-research with homebased workers

## **VERTICAL MAPPING PACK**

Tracing production and marketing chains

## **WE WORK AT HOME**

### **THE TRAINING MANUAL**

Comprehensive training manual, drawing on experience of mapping work in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe  
— *available on paper or CD*

## **WE WORK AT HOME**

Booklet outlining results of first two years of the programme — with colour photos —  
*available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi and Tamil.*

## **PHOTO PACK**

Set of A4 colour photos of homebased workers and their organisations from different countries doing mapping  
— *ideal training or educational tool.*

## **POSTCARD PACK**

Set of 16 colour postcards illustrating mapping in different countries — can be used as a mini photo pack  
— *available in English, Chinese, Japanese and Bahasai.*

## **FROM CHILE TO CHINA**

Small book, illustrated with colour photos, describes different kinds of organisations that came out of the mapping programme.