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About WIEGO: WIEGO is a global research-policy network that seeks to improve the status of the working poor, especially women, in the informal economy. WIEGO builds alliances with and shares its membership from three consistencies: membership-based organisations of informal workers, researchers and statisticians working on the informal economy, and professionals from development agencies interested in the informal economy. WIEGO pursues its objectives by helping to build and strengthen networks of informal worker organisations; undertaking policy analyses, statistical research, and data analysis on the informal economy; providing policy advice and convening policy dialogues on the informal economy and documenting and disseminating good practice in support of the informal workforce.
Warwick Junction has provided exhilarating proof of how poor people, in sensitive collaboration with urban planners, can enliven a city centre, generate employment for themselves and expand services for the population at large.

– Professor Keith Hart, the anthropologist who coined the phrase ‘informal sector’

This book offers a fresh look at street traders’ lives, the role they play in city life and their contribution to its economy. It shows that it is possible to include street trading in urban plans in a way that adds to the vitality and attraction of cities. This is not a common perception of street trading or of urban planning, which makes the book all the more significant.

Warwick is a vibrant street trading area situated in the primary transport hub in South Africa’s east coast city of Durban. This is the context for the book: here a small dedicated team of local authority officials, street traders and their leaders worked for over a decade tackling seemingly insurmountable urban management and design challenges. It is hoped that this account of the transformation of Warwick will inspire other local authorities and planners as they deal with the challenges and opportunities presented by the informal economy.

Biographies

Richard Dobson, an architect by training, worked for over ten years for the eThekwini Municipality as project leader, first of the Warwick Junction Urban Renewal Project and then for the inner city renewal programme. He left the city in 2006 to establish ASIYE ETAFULENI (Zulu for ‘let us negotiate’) – a non governmental organisation (NGO) offering design and facilitation services to the informal economy. His professional technical, design and project work has been recognized through various national and international awards and citations.

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