

# Keeping Food Markets Working: Beira and Pemba (Mozambique)

## Qualitative Rapid Needs Assessment



This Qualitative Factsheet, developed by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), presents a selection of key findings from key informant interviews and focus groups that were conducted in Beira and Pemba (Mozambique). Together with surveys, satellite image analysis and desktop studies, this qualitative study forms part of a mixed method Rapid Needs Assessment, intended to provide an understanding of these cities and their traditional food markets during COVID-19. Urban food systems stakeholders, like policymakers, market vendors, and SMEs participated in the study. This Assessment is part of GAIN's Urban Governance for Nutrition programme's Keeping Food Markets Working during COVID-19. The presented findings help inform the co-design of policy and coordination options with local policymakers and other stakeholders.

### COVID-19 in Mozambique

- Access to accurate information on COVID-19 infections and deaths is challenging. In January 2021, the reported incidence of COVID-19 cases and deaths increased rapidly.<sup>1a, 1b</sup>
- Mozambique did not implement a mandated lockdown. COVID-19 restrictions include curfews, limitations on number of people in closed venues such as meetings and religious services, some travel constraints and quarantine requirements.
- Restrictions like curfews and the knock-on impact of import food dependency with South Africa were reported as disrupting urban food supply chains during COVID-19.
- FAO and WFP: In 2021, Mozambique, is one of 23 countries identified as a global hunger hotspot; with 2.9 million people in Mozambique suffering 'high acute food insecurity'.<sup>2</sup>

### National Food and Nutrition Context

- Notable levels of food insecurity and undernourishment: Almost 70% of the population suffers from moderate to severe food insecurity; Children under 5 years: 4% wasting and 38% stunting in 2020.<sup>3</sup>
- Mozambique's Food Security Outlook: January - September 2021, identifies Beira and Pemba as: Acute Food Insecurity Phase 3: Crises.<sup>1b</sup>

## City Context

### Beira

- Capital city of and largest in Sofala province. A port city with an estimated population, in 2017, of 550,000 - 670,000 residents (Based on the Beira 2035 Master Plan projections).<sup>4</sup>
- Recovering from Cyclone Idai in 2019 as well as compounding impacts from later cyclones e.g. Cyclone Eloise.

### Pemba

- Capital and port city of Cabo Delgado province; estimated population: 200,500 as per 2017 Census.<sup>5</sup>
- Some food supply disruptions due to conflict in parts of Cabo Delgado province. Increasing challenge on food demands in city due to influx of Internally Displaced People due to conflict; women and girls reported as especially vulnerable to the conflict impacts.<sup>6</sup>

## Qualitative Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA)

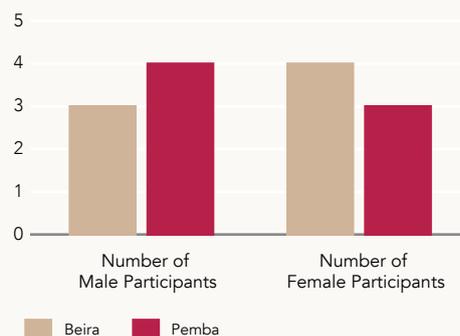
- Conducted: January – February 2021 in Beira and Pemba.
- 14 Key informant interviews (n=7 Beira, n=7 Pemba) with local and provincial governance participants.
- 8 focus groups, 4 per city, comprising 6 – 8 participants per group; with a total of 51 participants.
- Initial findings also reviewed by GAIN's Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) (12 in-country and international experts).
- Findings shared with food systems stakeholders, in both cities, during participatory, policy design workshops (June- August 2021).

## Participants

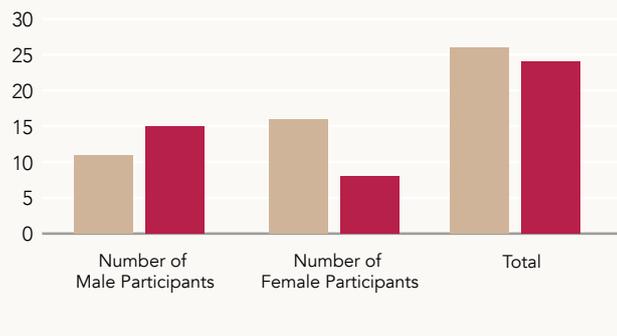
Participants comprised individuals and groups of urban food system stakeholders with an emphasis on policy makers, market vendors and authorities and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) - with attention to vulnerable communities and gender.

### Gender

Key Informant Interviews: Gender



Focus Groups: Gender



## Selection of key findings



**“The most vulnerable group here is the entire population... We are talking about the whole society, because the law of the market says, ‘The more demand, the more supply’... there is interdependence, both suffered.”**

(Focus group participant [government official], Pemba)

### COVID-19

- Measures such as mask-wearing were mandatory in all markets, but levels of compliance varied.



**“If we go to the market now, we’ll observe that at least 90% of the people bring their masks to the market, but the problem is the proper use of them.”**

(Focus group participant [SMEs and vendors], Pemba)

- Some vendors were frustrated by the perceived lack of personal responsibility for adhering to safety measures among some market workers.
- Reports that when police arrived at a market to enforce social distancing and mask-wearing, people would comply, but remove their masks as soon as the police left.



**“The municipality has worked very hard, but we, the people, are sometimes ignorant... even adult people have to be forced to wear a mask, knowing that the situation is not right.”**

(Focus group participant [women vendors], Beira)

- Overall, vendors felt that the safety measures were appropriate, but that these were not adequately monitored or enforced.
- Compliance with safety measures had declined since they were first implemented. Some instances, in Pemba, of youth replacing usual vendors in markets to circumvent adult COVID-19 market safety regulations.

### Economy

#### Customers

- Customer numbers declined; thought to be because customers wanted to avoid the crowded marketplace and were reluctant to travel far from their homes.
- Markets closed earlier in the day (curfew) as a safety measure, so some customers were unable to visit due to their own work commitments and travel times to home.
- Shopping behaviour changed (days/times). This affected what was purchased and food quality (e.g. bread and seafood). Customers were limited to the foods available when they visited the market.
- Purchasing power declined due to rising unemployment and/or loss of income.

#### Vendors

- Shorter opening hours (curfew) impacted vendors’ businesses, via fewer sales and increased spoilage (loss of quality and food waste). This affected some vendors more than others, e.g., fishmongers’ fish in the morning and sell their catch later -unfortunately with limited access to customers when they were ready to sell. In response, several vendors changed the types of food they sold or delivered.

- In some markets, the number of vendors was limited to improve social distancing. This resulted in a scarcity of some food products and was viewed as a source of tension between vendors themselves and between vendors and local government.



**If a certain vendor is the only one who sells a specific food and they are forced out of the market, it creates scarcity of that product within that neighbourhood.**

(Key informant interview [government official], Pemba)

### Food Supply

- Food producers and urban supply and distribution, were viewed as vulnerable due to unpredictable weather patterns and COVID-19 (Beira and Pemba); and the threat of widening conflict in Cabo Delgado (Pemba).
- Vendors purchased less stock and were concerned that this reduced producers' income, limiting their capacity to buy seeds for the next crop and potentially impacting vendors and producers sustained income.
- Beira was particularly affected by border closures and import restrictions. The prices of everyday food products rose.



**"The [food] products were not coming to the market, people would go to the market, but they couldn't find their products, or if they found it, it was more expensive, because the transportation costs have also increased, and basically people started selling anything they could find."**

(Key informant interview [Vendor], Beira)

### Infrastructure

- Formal and informal (often roadside) traditional markets; within and outside of local governance management (Beira and Pemba).



**"...there are stands or people, sellers, that sell directly on the floor, they just roll out a cloth, a bag, anything on the floor. And it rains, and there is mud..."**

(Focus group participant [SMEs and vendors], Beira)

- To support social distancing, in some markets, stalls were placed two metres apart. This resulted in a decline in sales due to fewer vendors in the market at any time.
- In some cases, the more organised and spacious arrangement of stalls brought other benefits, such as a reduction in crime.
- Vendors in both cities expressed the need for suitable storage facilities to prevent food spoilage (quality and food waste).
- Government officials and most vendors said they would prefer more organised market spaces to reduce overcrowding. This could also improve hygiene by preventing vendors selling from the floor.



**"...that business... if it is well ordered, it may not be a problem. If it is well ordered, a stall, for example, made of wood, which, at the end of the day, can be disassembled and taken home..."**

(Focus group participant [government officials], Beira)

## Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) COVID-19 Response

The necessary COVID-19 responses, such as lockdowns and/or curfews, have placed a spotlight on the weaknesses of food systems across the world. In the COVID-19 context, the single most important thing that can be done for the health and resilience of people and economies is to protect the nutritional status of current and future generations. GAIN has developed the *Keeping Food Markets Working (KFMW) program* as an emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis, providing rapid support to food system workers, to small and medium enterprises supplying nutritious foods, and to keeping fresh food markets open. While disease control responses to the pandemic are essential, they also disrupt food systems, depress income, and put a strain on social protection programs, which can threaten the nutritional status of the most vulnerable. The KFMW program is focused on mitigating those risks and keeping affordable nutritious foods flowing in African and Asian markets to the people who most need it.

**Supporting effective policymaking and coordination during the pandemic**, is one of several initiatives under this KFMW program. This initiative focuses on 6 cities, in 3 countries i.e., **Machakos and Kiambu (Kenya); Beira and Pemba (Mozambique); Rawalpindi and Peshawar (Pakistan)**, with the aim of better understanding city-context specific experiences of the urban food system during the pandemic – most especially traditional food markets which provide vital access to food for the most vulnerable. Valuably, the evidence reveals food system, everyday realities as experienced and practiced by urban residents and policy makers. Together with a snapshot vendor survey in markets in Beira and Pemba, as well as satellite imagery and desktop studies, this qualitative rapid assessment helps better inform and align urban food system policy and coordination for all.

For more information, please view our other factsheets on the survey findings of this rapid assessment and future co-designed policy toolkits:

[gainhealth.org/impact/our-response-covid-19/effective-policymaking-and-coordination-during-pandemic](https://gainhealth.org/impact/our-response-covid-19/effective-policymaking-and-coordination-during-pandemic)

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