

Madaraka market, Kiambu (Kenya) 2020/21



The COVID-19 Vendor Survey Factsheet (VSF), developed by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) highlights the behaviours, perceptions, and decisions of vendors in the traditional open-air Madaraka market in Kiambu (Thika town), Kenya. The VSF provides a snapshot of vendor's challenges and needs as they cope with business and food security choices under COVID 19.

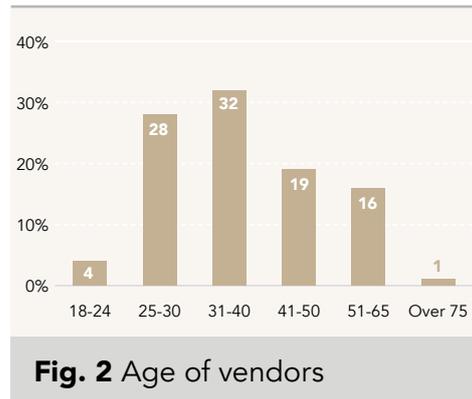
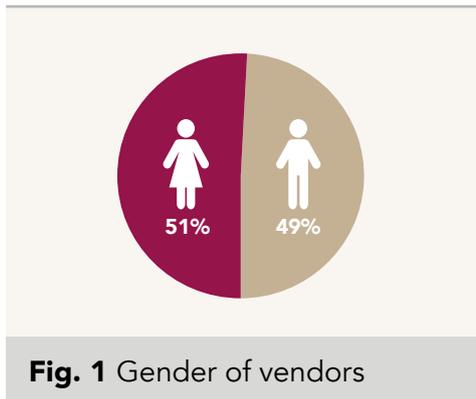
The assessment is based on face-to-face interviews with conveniently sampled vendors (n=85) from Madaraka market, conducted in December 2020.

Summary:

- 94% of vendors observed changes in the market due to COVID-19; for most vendors, the mandatory wearing of face masks for vendor and consumer and the setup of handwashing/sanitiser stations are the most useful changes.
- In addition to the measures that are already in place, many vendors demanded the enforcement of social distancing and market infrastructure changes/improvements regarding the drainage system, water and sanitation, shades, and security lighting.
- 99% of vendors have taken their own measures (such as wearing a face mask, using hand sanitiser, reminding customers to keep social distancing) due to COVID-19.
- 95% of vendors (100% of female vendors) stated that the number of customers decreased (substantially) during the pandemic.
- 60% of vendors used marketing strategies (additional discount, credit, advertisement) to increase the number of customers or sales under COVID-19.
- 78% of vendors reported a change in their suppliers (increase in supplier's prices, relying on fewer suppliers) since COVID-19 has been present in the area.

Vendors surveyed (n=85)

- 51% of vendors interviewed were female (Fig. 1).
- 79% of vendors were between 25 and 50 years of age (Fig. 2).
- 65% of vendors identified as Kikuyu; 16% as Kamba, 6% as Luo and 6% as Meru.
- 81% of vendors owned the business they were operating in.
- 45% of vendors have been working as vendors in Kiambu for more than 10 years, 19% for 3–5 years and 15% for 5–10 years.
- The vendors interviewed sold a wide range of foods (Fig. 3). None of the vendors (n=6) selling meat were female; significantly more vendors selling dairy and roots and tubers were women ($p < 0.1$).



Market response to COVID-19

Almost all vendors (94%) observed changes in the market in response to COVID-19. Most vendors (88%) that noticed changes mentioned the setup of handwashing or sanitiser stations in the market and the mandate for all consumers and vendors to wear masks/nose and mouth covers (Fig. 4).

Most vendors stated the mandatory wearing of face masks for vendor and consumer and the setup of handwashing/sanitiser stations as most useful changes in reducing their individual risk of contracting COVID-19. The share of female vendors stating the usefulness of mandating vendors ($p < 0.1$) and consumers ($p < 0.05$) to wear face masks was significantly higher than in male colleagues.

In addition to the measures that are already in place, vendors mostly demanded a mandate for social distancing. Further, according to vendors, market infrastructure changes - including the repair of drainage systems, proper sanitation facilities, provision of water and detergents, shades, and security lights - are also needed.

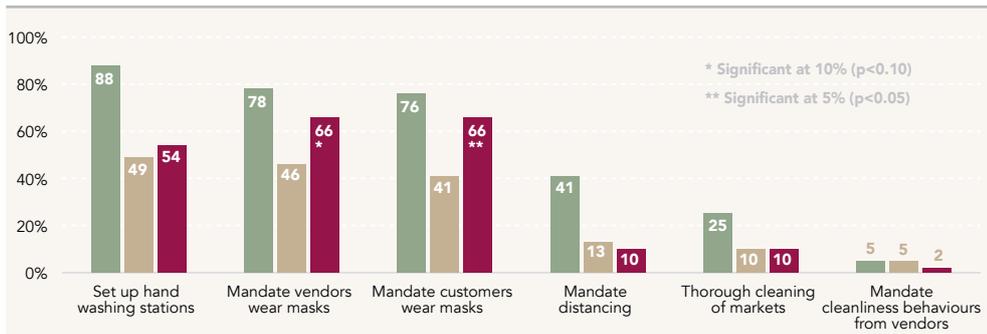


Fig. 4 Market response to COVID-19

■ Measures recognised by all vendors (n=80) ■ Usefulness for male vendors (n=39) ■ Usefulness for female vendors (n=41)

Knowledge and implementation of protective measures against COVID-19

Almost all vendors (99%) said they had taken measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Among vendors, 80% said they always wear a face mask, 51% always use hand sanitiser, 45% regularly remind customers to keep social distancing when possible and 44% set up their own handwashing or sanitiser stations (Fig. 5). While a significantly higher proportion of female vendors said they used hand sanitiser ($p < 0.05$), a significantly higher proportion of male vendors mentioned an increased cleanliness of surfaces ($p < 0.1$).

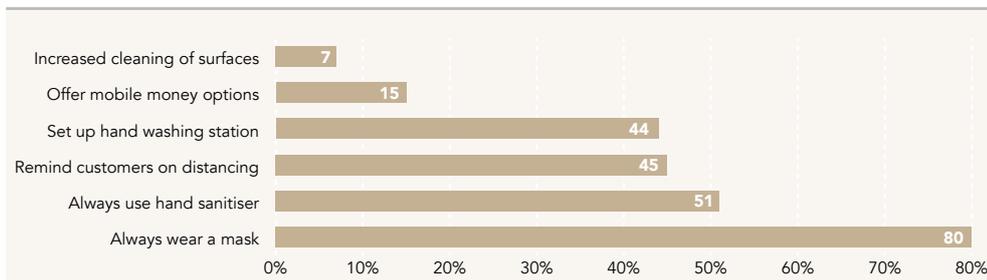


Fig. 5 Measures taken by vendors (n=84)

Impacts of COVID-19

In Madaraka market, fruit and vegetables accounted for 30% of the produce sold by the surveyed vendors, with an even spread of availability of other produce, such as legumes, grains, chicken, roots and tubers, eggs, meat, and fish.

Overall, about 17% of vendors (a significantly higher share of female vendors [23%; $p < 0.1$] than male vendors [10%]) changed the type of products or food groups they sell during COVID-19 in the last six months. Of those vendors who made changes, most reported increasing sales of fruits, vegetables, grains, eggs, and dairy. However, a couple of vendors also decreased the sales of eggs, vegetables, and dairy (Fig. 6). Reasons for changing the food products sold mainly included a decrease in demand (50%) and seasonal changes (36%), besides some other factors (Fig. 7).

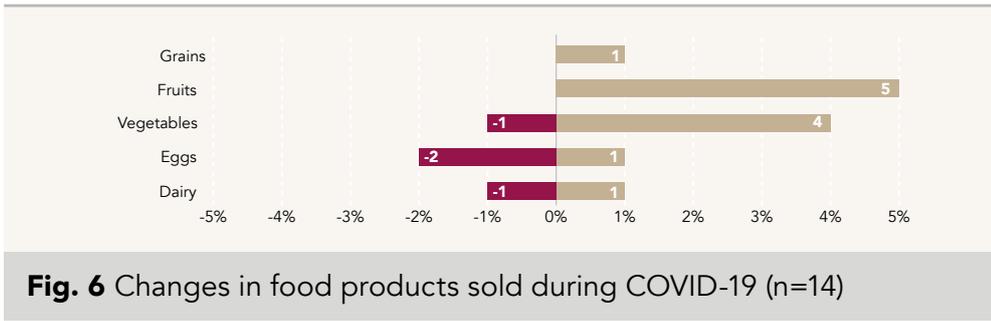


Fig. 6 Changes in food products sold during COVID-19 (n=14)



Fig. 7 Changes in food products sold during COVID-19 (n=14)

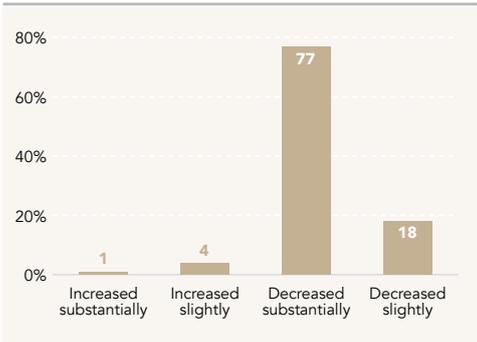


Fig. 8 Changes in the number of customers due to COVID-19 (n=82)

Almost all vendors (98%) stated that the number of customers on a typical day changed due to COVID-19. The difference between female and male vendors was significant ($p < 0.1$): all female vendors (100%) reported experiencing a change in customer numbers, compared with 93% of male vendors. Most vendors stating a change in the number of customers reported a substantial (77%) or a slight (18%) decrease in the number of customers (Fig. 8).

Business strategies and vendor connectivity

Most (60%) vendors surveyed used marketing strategies to increase the number of customers or sales under COVID-19. Almost half of those using marketing strategies provided additional discounts (45%) or credit (27%), used advertisements such as leaflets, radio, tv or social media, or called (former) customers directly (10%) (Fig. 9). The proportion of female vendors using advertisements was significantly higher ($p < 0.1$) than those of male vendors.

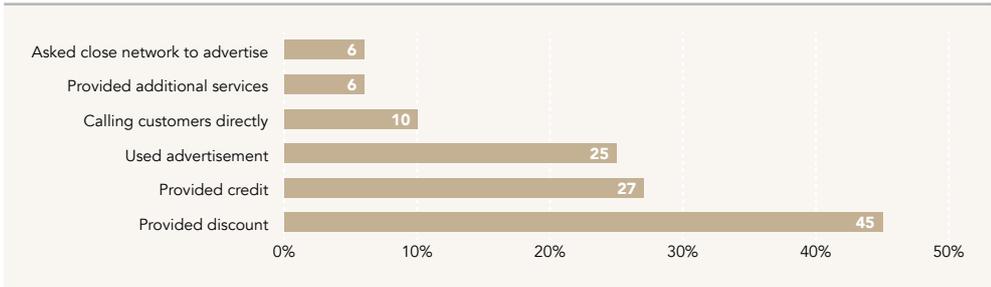
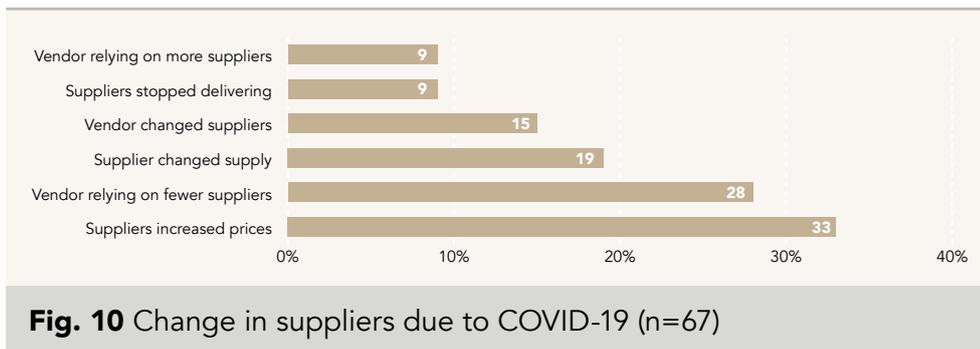


Fig. 9 Type of marketing strategies used (n=51)



Among the vendors surveyed, 78% reported experiencing a change in their suppliers since the start of the pandemic. One third of those reporting a change in suppliers also noted an increase in supplier's prices (33%), mentioned that they had to rely on fewer suppliers (28%), or that the suppliers changed the supplied products (19%) in the last month (Fig. 10).

Interestingly, there seemed to be some different effects on suppliers observed for female and male vendors. A greater share of female vendors reporting a decrease in suppliers ($p < 0.05$) while a greater share of male vendors noted an increase in the number of suppliers ($p < 0.1$) they rely on. These changes might be specific to the commodities being sold by the vendors but could also point to different experiences regarding suppliers for female and male vendors.

Methods: Assessing vendor behaviours, perceptions and decisions under COVID-19

Insights into vendor behaviours, perceptions and decisions under COVID-19 are based on interviews with 85 vendors from Madaraka market in Kiambu. The vendors were conveniently sampled and interviewed in the market between 7–8th December 2020 using a structured questionnaire. The interview tool has previously been translated into Swahili and tested in the field. Surveys were conducted with complete adherence to global guidelines on COVID 19 prevention and control. All data were collected via Open Data Kit and stored on KoBo Toolbox; data analysis and differences between vendor's gender using proportion tests were carried out using Stata version 15.1.

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 weakness 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)* programme 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 programmes, which can threaten the nutritional status of the most vulnerable. The KFMW programme 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 programme. 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. Together with key informant interviews and focus groups involving a range of urban food system stakeholders, including market committees and city government policy makers, as well as satellite imagery and desktop studies, this vendor survey helps better inform and align urban food system policy, coordination and resilience for all.

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

- gainhealth.org/impact/our-response-covid-19#keeping-food-markets-working-programme
- gainhealth.org/impact/our-response-covid-19/effective-policymaking-and-coordination-during-pandemic

Suggested citation: Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. 2021. COVID-19 Vendor Survey Factsheet. Kiambu, Kenya. June 2021.

This publication has been produced by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition with funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs of Trade and Development of Canada and Irish Aid Foundation. The views expressed herein are the responsibility of GAIN and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supporting organisations.

Contact

GAIN
The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)
Rue de Varembé 7
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
T: +41 22 749 18 50
E: info@gainhealth.org
© 2021 The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
www.gainhealth.org

