

Marikiti market, Machakos (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 Marikiti market in Machakos (Machakos 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.

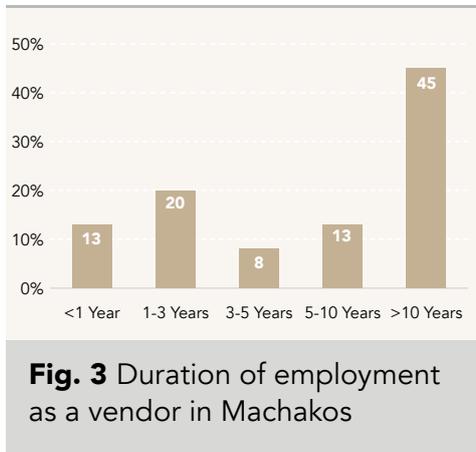
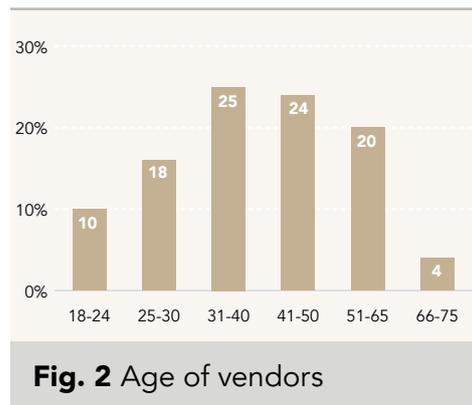
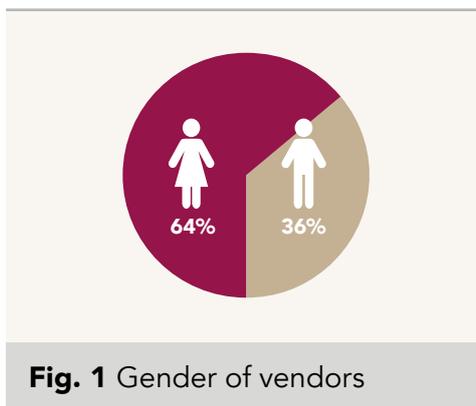
The assessment is based on face-to-face interviews with conveniently sampled vendors (n=84) from Marikiti market, conducted in December 2020.

Summary:

- 98% 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 measures already in place, 36% of vendors demanded regulation of the number of people in the market and thorough cleaning of the market with disinfectant (21%).
- 86% of vendors have taken their own measures (wearing a face mask, using hand sanitiser, reminding customers to keep social distancing) due to COVID-19.
- 97% of vendors stated that the number of customers decreased (substantially) during the pandemic.
- 32% of vendors used marketing strategies (additional discounts, advertisements through their network, credit) to increase the number of customers or sales under COVID-19.
- 58% of vendors reported a change in their suppliers (increase in suppliers' prices, suppliers stopped delivering) since COVID-19 has been present in the area; the increase in suppliers' prices was significantly more relevant for female vendors.

Vendors surveyed (n=84)

- 64% of vendors interviewed were female (Fig. 1).
- The age profile of vendors was mixed (Fig. 2).
- 96% of vendors identified as Kamba, 2% as Kikuyu and 1% as Luhya.
- 82% of vendors owned the business they were operating in; among female vendors, this figure was even higher, with 91% being self-employed.
- The length of time spent as a vendor in Machakos varied; 45% have been vendors for over 10 years, 33% for 3 years or less (Fig. 3).
- 61% of the vendors sold vegetables, 31% fruits and 14% grains. The few vendors selling poultry (n=5) and meat (n=5) were all males; a significantly higher share of vendors selling vegetables and fruits were female ($p < 0.05$).



Market response to COVID-19

Almost all vendors (98%) observed changes in the market space due to COVID-19. Most vendors (98%) 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. The same measures have also been recognised by the vendors as being useful in reducing the individual risk of contracting COVID-19 (Fig. 4).

In addition to the measures that are already in place, 36% of vendors demanded regulation of the number of people in the market, thorough cleaning of the market with disinfectant (21%), telling people to stay home if they are sick (17%) and social distancing (17%).

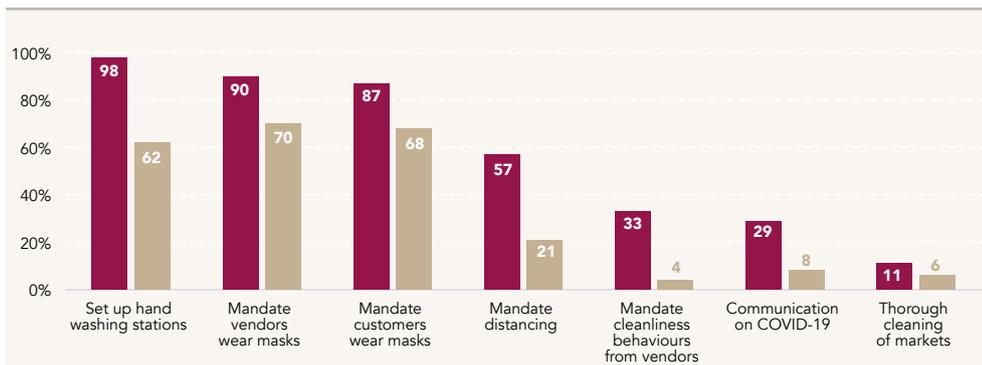


Fig. 4 Market responses to COVID-19 and usefulness of measures (n=82)

■ Market measures observed ■ Perceived usefulness of measures

Knowledge and implementation of protective measures against COVID-19

All vendors have taken measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID 19. All vendors said that they regularly wear face masks, 86% always used hand sanitiser, 46% reminded customers to keep social distancing, 35% set up their own handwashing stations, and 32% offered mobile money payment options (Fig. 5).

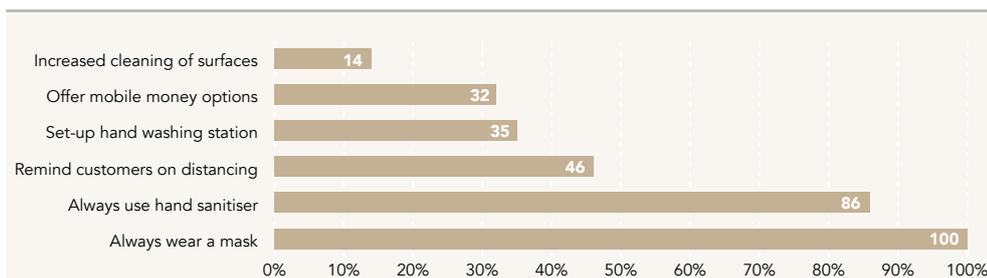


Fig. 5 Measures taken by vendors due to COVID-19

Impacts of COVID-19

Reflecting local food availability, 91% of vendors surveyed in Marakiti sold fruits and vegetables.

Only 10% of vendors 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 a decrease in fruits and vegetables and some also reported an increase in fruits. However, a couple of vendors also decreased their sales of dairy, eggs and vegetables (Fig. 6). Reasons for changing the food products sold included seasonal changes (63%) and decrease in demand (38%) or supply (50%).

In addition to changes in the products sold, almost all vendors (93%) stated that the number of customers on a typical day changed due to COVID-19. Most of the vendors reporting a change in the number of customers reported a substantial (59%) or a slight (38%) decrease in the number of customers (Fig. 7).

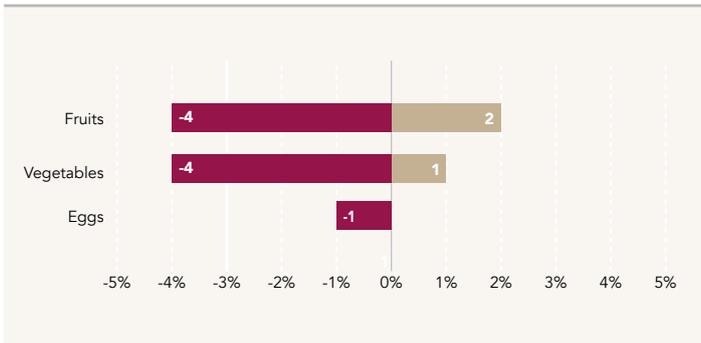


Fig. 6 Share of vendors changes in food products sold during COVID-19, last 6 months

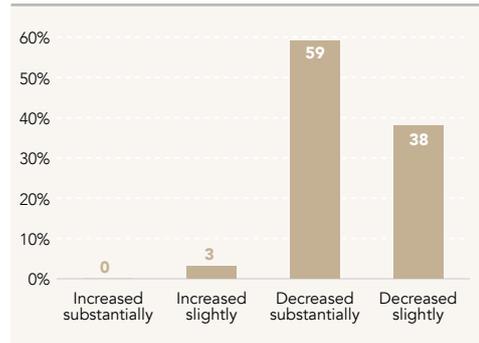


Fig. 7 Changes to the number of customers due to COVID-19 (n=78)

Business strategies and vendor connectivity

Among the vendors surveyed, about one third (32%) used marketing strategies to increase the number of customers or sales under COVID-19. Most of those using marketing strategies provided additional discounts (63%), asked close network to advertise for their business (26%), or provided credit (19%) or additional services (19%) (Fig. 8).

More than half (58%) of the vendors surveyed reported experiencing a change in their suppliers since COVID-19 has been present in the area. The changes in suppliers varied and there are some significant differences according to the gender of the vendor. Of those vendors that noted a change, 43% mention an increase in suppliers' prices. Among female vendors, 56% reported an increase in suppliers' prices – a significantly higher proportion ($p < 0.05$) than among male vendors. For male vendors, the most frequently mentioned change (29%, compared with just 3% of female vendors) was to rely on more suppliers than pre-COVID-19 (Fig. 9).

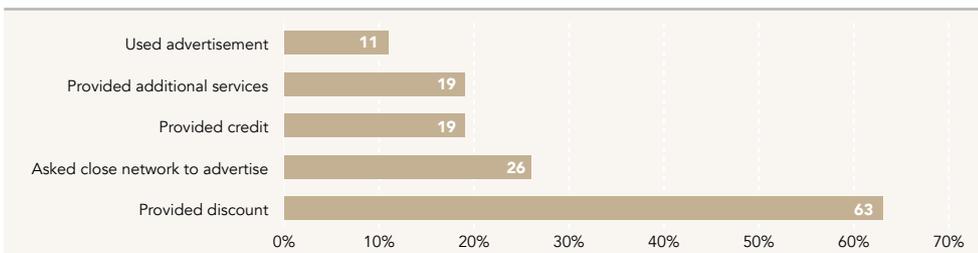


Fig. 8 Type of marketing strategies used (n=27)

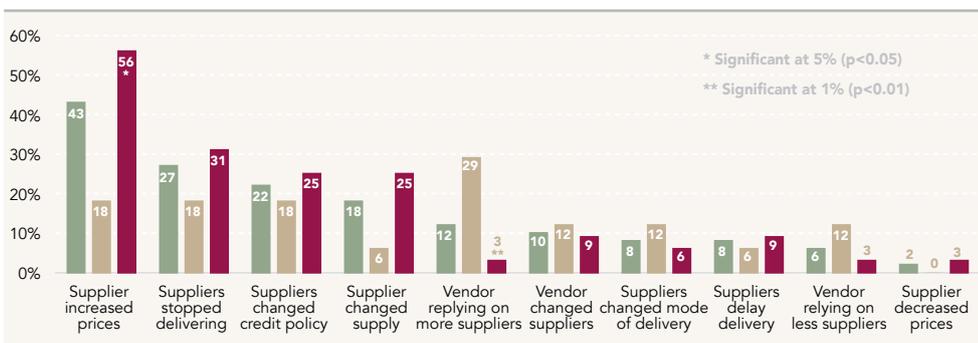


Fig. 9 Change in suppliers due to COVID-19 (n=49)

Legend: Total (n=49) (Green), Male (n=17) (Brown), Female (n=32) (Red)

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

Insights into vendor behaviours, perceptions and decisions under COVID-19 have been based on interviews of 84 vendors from Marikiti market in Machakos. The vendors were conveniently sampled and interviewed in the market between 6–8th 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 collect and stored on KoBo Toolbox; data analysis and differences between vendor's gender using proportion tests were done 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

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