

EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food

COVID-19 Traditional Market Report Brief

Nairobi Metropolitan Area | March 2021 | Issue 2

The bi-monthly Traditional Market Report (TMR), developed by EatSafe, tracks behaviors and daily decisions made by vendors and consumers in two markets in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area (Marikiti and Madaraka). In addition to summarizing perceptions on COVID-19 and the difficulties faced by market actors in these two traditional markets, the TMR tracks prices of selected nutritious foods every two weeks. The TMR report tracks several accepted indicators that help determine the resilience of market systems as market actors cope with business and food security choices under COVID-19 conditions. The TMR highlights two new surveys from February and March 2021 phone interviews of a panel of vendors (n=30) and consumers (n=30), comparing results to the first TMR in January 2021.

Insights from vendor perspective between January and March 2021

- Share of vendors reporting a decrease in the number of customers in the last 9 months decreased (from 93% Jan; 86% Feb; 63% Mar) while the share of vendors reporting an increase in the number of customers (from 7% Jan; 10% Feb; 23% Mar) or no change (from 0% Jan; 3% Feb; 13% Mar).
- Share of vendors finding it somewhat difficult or very difficult to follow new COVID rules in the market decreased between the months (43% Jan; 37% Feb; 20% Mar).
- Share of vendors (80% Jan; 93% Feb; 100% Mar) stated having started to share resources with other vendors including hand washing facilities, transportation, suppliers, sanitizers, and masks increased further.
- Share of vendors that borrowed money due to COVID-19 decreased (from 63% Jan; 55% Feb; 47% Mar). In March, the money borrowed came from informal cooperatives (79%), friends (14%), banks (14%), other businesses (14%), or relatives (7%).

Insights from consumer perspective between January and March 2021

- Share of consumer households that have been financially impacted by COVID-19 (i.e., loss/ or reduction of income) increased (93% Jan; 96% Feb; 97% Mar). In March, 43% of consumers coped by decreasing the consumption of food, engaging in other income earning activity (37%), or decreasing spending (20%).
- Share of consumers that reported doing most of their food shopping at markets increased (80% Jan; 92% Feb; 87% Mar). Consumers also obtained food from supermarkets, small shops, or kiosks.
- Share of consumers that considered the majority of vendors trustworthy changed (50% Jan; 54% Feb; 42% Mar); Reasons included not knowing the vendor well, not knowing where the products come from, or the vendor using different business methods.
- Share of consumers that have been asked for feedback by vendors and/or market officials in the last nine months was very small and increased only slightly (3% Jan; 4% Feb; 6% Mar).

Food prices between November 2020 and March 2021

While food prices for cabbage, carrots, milk and beef increased between Nov-20 and Mar-21 (24%; 34%; 6%; 3%, respectively) prices for kales, omena and pulses decreased (34%; 11%; 8%; 2%; 1%, respectively).



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



I. BACKGROUND ON THE COVID-19 SITUATION

While the incidence of Kenya’s national COVID-19 cases has been significantly decreasing since November 2020, the number of cases has increased, with a significant rise between February and March 2021 (Fig. 1).

Between 3 January and 16 April 2021, 148,128 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 2,420 deaths were reported by the Ministry of Health in Kenya. In the peak of this second wave of COVID-19 (week of the 22 March) the weekly infection rate of confirmed cases was 9,167. Based on [the March 22 daily infection rate](#) (1,130), confirmed cases were highest in Nairobi (730), Kiambu county (118), and Machakos county (60). Of all confirmed cases in the counties, 28% of cases in Kiambu were in Thika town, and 30% of cases in Machakos county were in Machakos town, where the two markets of this assessment are located.

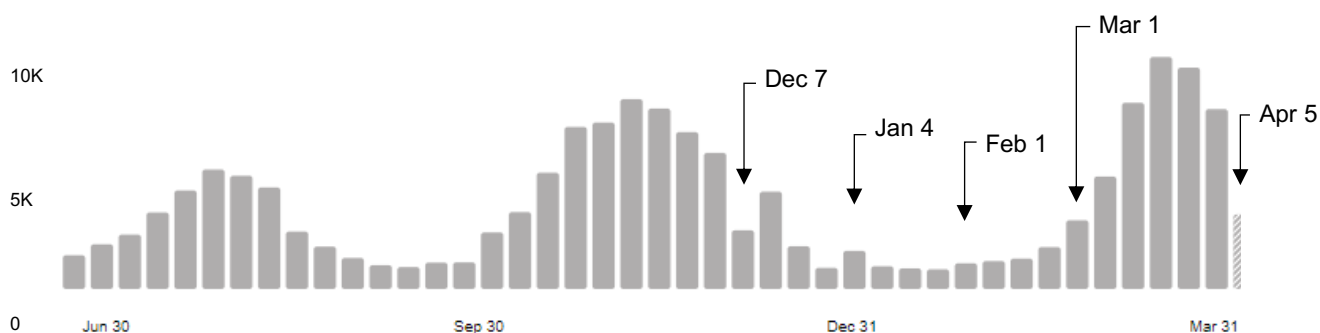


Fig. 1 Confirmed COVID-19 cases in Kenya, weekly ([WHO, 16 April 2021](#)).

In March, Kenya started rolling out nationwide COVID-19 vaccines, with 1.12 million vaccine doses distributed and 40,359 frontline workers vaccinated by 22 March. The country’s vaccination plan aims to cover [30% of the population by June 2023](#). Within the first phase (March – June 2021) healthcare and frontline workers including security personnel and teachers will be prioritized, though the second phase (July 2021 – June 2022) targets the most vulnerable (i.e., elderly and adults with comorbidities). The third phase (July 2022 – June 2023) will target community workers and service provider in hospitality and the tourism sectors.

2. MARKET CHARACTERISTICS AND CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19

Marikiti and **Madaraka** are informal open-air markets situated respectively in Machakos town (Machakos county) and Thika town (Kiambu county), less than 70 km from Nairobi (Figure 2). Thika and Machakos towns have about 250,000 inhabitants. In both markets, the major food items sold are fruits, vegetables, pulses, roots, and tubers. In close proximity outside the markets, butcheries, small retailers, and vendors sell meat, fish, eggs, and dairy.

2.1 Marikiti Market, Machakos, Machakos county, Kenya

The traditional open-air market is in the urban area of Machakos town, the capital of Machakos county (Fig. 2). During the pandemic, the Marikiti market noticed a drop of vendors from 1,500 pre-COVID-19 to about 800 in March 2021, according to the market association. The decrease in vendors is likely related to the relocation of

many vendors in the town due to reduced business opportunities. About 4,000 consumers visit the market daily, with a high 10,000 consumers on the market days (Mondays and Fridays).

Due to COVID-19, the market association installed eight hand washing stations at all entry and exit gates. The county government added two storage water tanks for refilling hand washing stations and maintaining adequate amounts of water. The market association enforced mask wearing for both consumers and vendors, instituting a patrol schedule to ensure compliance. Vendors were instructed to not serve any customer wearing the mask incorrectly. Furthermore, customers were prohibited from touching commodities and were instructed to instead point at what they would like to purchase. The market association also used posters in strategic positions of the market to create awareness on hygiene. During the initial lockdown period, market timing was revised and shortened from 5am to 6am for opening and 7pm to 6pm for closing.

2.2 Madaraka market, Thika, Kiambu county, Kenya

This traditional open-air market is one of the trade corridors to northern counties including Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit, Machakos and Muranga, as well as Somalia. Most of the commodities traded in this market are sourced from Nyeri, Laikipia, Meru, Narok and Nyandarua counties as well as Tanzania, especially onions. The market is in a peri-urban setting in Thika town, close to the main road.

It operates 24-hours with Tuesdays and Fridays the busiest days (Fig. 3). The market association reports that the number of retailers and wholesalers increased during COVID-19 from 1,500 pre-COVID to 2,500 in March 2021 and 350 to 500, respectively. Since many people have lost jobs in other sectors, they became involved in food trade to earn their living. Based on the increase in vendors and the accompanied increase in competition, profit margins for most vendors have decreased. Market space is decreasing due to the rising number of vendors. While the number of vendors increased, the number of consumers decreased from about 5,000 pre-COVID-19 to about 3,000 in March 2021. Due to COVID-19, Ministry of Health advises vendors and consumers wear face masks and wash their hands regularly. The market is also fumigated on a regular basis.



Fig. 2 Location of Marikiti market and Madaraka market, close to Nairobi, Kenya.



Fig. 3 Vendors in Madaraka market, Thika, Kiambu, Kenya.

2.3 Bi-Weekly Consumer and Vendor Survey Results under COVID-19

In addition to the resilience assessment, EatSafe continues to conduct rapid COVID-19 market surveys of 40 consumers and 40 vendors from each market. This activity began in September 2020 and has since been repeated every two weeks, with results summarized and published in market-specific bulletins every month. Results below are from both markets including all data rounds between September 2020¹ and March 2021.

2.3.1 Impact of COVID-19 in the markets

Based on the rapid assessment, 70% of consumers reported concerns when shopping in the market in the last couple of weeks. As shown in Fig. 4, those with concerns identified the following issues: (1) fear of contracting COVID-19 (67%), (2) fear of vendors getting sick and not being open (24%) and (3) the food wanted not being available (23%). Most consumers (81%) had observed changes in the markets due to COVID-19 in the last two weeks, mostly stating the set-up of washing facilities or hand sanitizer (88%), the mandate to all consumers (84%) and vendors to wear face masks (82%), and the mandate for distancing in markets (54%).

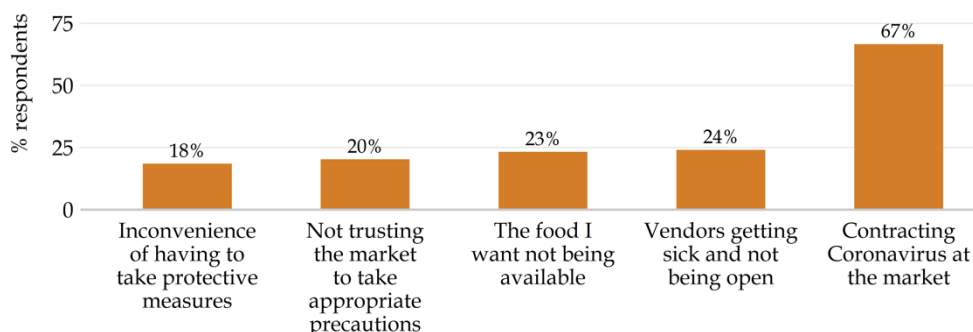


Fig. 4 Consumers: Greatest concerns when shopping at the market in the last 2

Almost all vendors (97%) interviewed in the bi-weekly assessments stated that the pandemic had an immediate impact on their business. Most vendors stated that they experience decreased customers (91%) and sales (83%), while 37% had difficulties accessing product to sell, difficulty to access financing (27%) or difficulty transporting goods (23%) (Fig. 5).

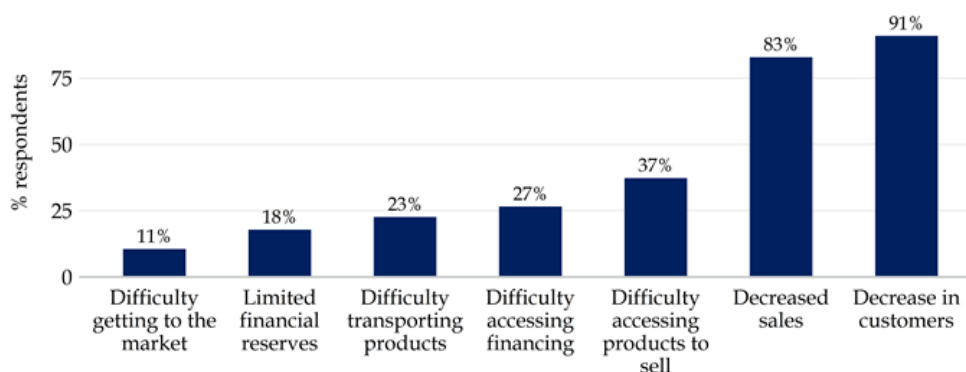


Fig. 5 Vendors: Immediate impact on business due to COVID-19

3. MARKET RESILIENCE UNDER COVID-19

This TMR highlights two new data sets from February and March and compares them to results from the first TMR in January 2021. Data was collected through monthly panel interviews with 30 vendors and 30

¹ Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. 15 September 2020. COVID Bulletin. Kenya Issue #1. A USAID EatSafe Bulletin. COVID-19 Traditional Market Report | Nairobi Metropolitan Area | March 2021 | Issue 2

consumers from both the Marikiti market and Madaraka market. Food prices for this report have been assessed between 20 November 2020 and 19 March 2021.

3.1 Connectivity

Connectivity includes not only the extent of connections vendors or other market actors might have but also the relationships between connected actors. Too many or too few connections can hamper the capacity to generate or sustain the growth of the market system. In this assessment connectivity is analyzed based on the vendors' observations regarding the number and changes in customers and suppliers.

Between January and March, the share of vendors reporting a decrease in customers has declined (from 93% to 63%) and the share of vendors reporting an increase in customers in the last 9 months has increased (7% Jan; 10% Feb; 23% Mar; (Fig. 6).

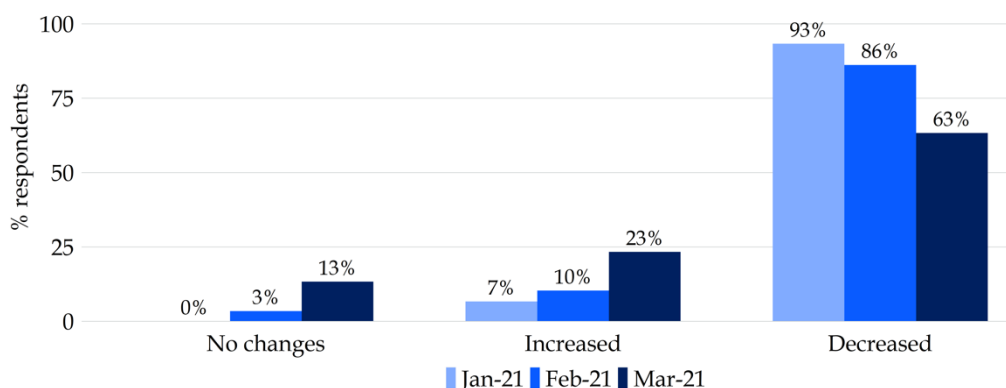


Fig. 6 Vendors: Changes in the number of customers, last 9 months

Between January and March, the number of customers and suppliers from which vendors purchased their goods only changed slightly. While the share of vendors with more than 26 customers increased slightly (from 20% to 23%) the share of vendors with more than 6 suppliers decreased slightly (from 50% to 47%).

The share of vendors reporting an overall change in suppliers decreased (from 67% Jan; 66% Feb; 47% Mar). Fig. 7 shows the reason for changes in suppliers were similar over time. In March, 36% of vendors mentioned quality aspects, price (29%), seasonality (21%) and the inability of suppliers to supply (14%).

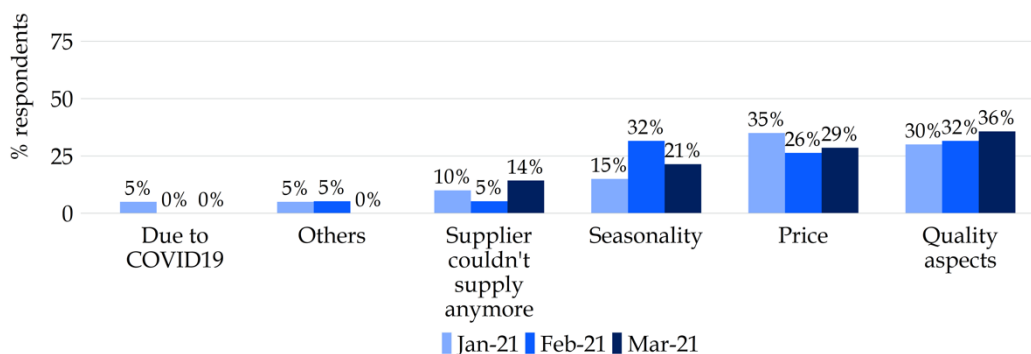


Fig. 7 Vendors: Major reason for the change in supplier(s)

3.2 Diversity

Diversity has multiple dimensions, including (1) the amount of variation in a system (i.e., the frequency and purpose of visiting the markets from consumer perspective) and (2) the balance between different types (i.e., types of products, firm sizes, marketing channels, or end markets) or (3) market system composition (i.e., how aspects of a market system are related to each other). In this assessment, diversity is analyzed using vendors' observations regarding number and changes in the commodities sold and consumers' shopping behavior.

Between January and March, the shares of vendors that reported changing any products sold in their business over the last month decreased (37% Jan; 24% Feb; 17% Mar). The number of different products sold by the vendors changed (Fig. 8). The share of vendors selling only one product increased (3% Jan; 14% Feb; 13% Mar), also the share of vendors that sold 6-15 products increased (27% Jan; 41% Feb; 43% Mar). Over the same months the share of vendors selling 2-5 products and those selling 16-30 products mainly decreased (2-5 products: 60% Jan; 38% Feb; 40% Mar; 16-30 products: 10% Jan; 7% Feb; 3% Mar).

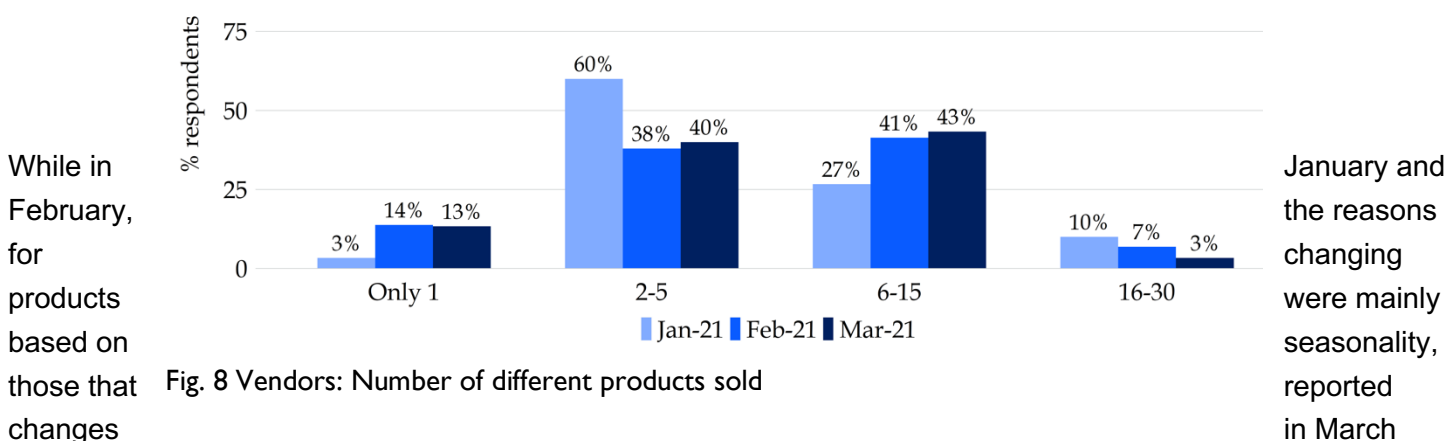


Fig. 8 Vendors: Number of different products sold

While in February, for products based on those that changes stated their reasons were primarily due to prices and increased supply. Between January and March, the frequency of consumers visiting the markets has shifted slightly (Fig. 9). The share of consumers that went

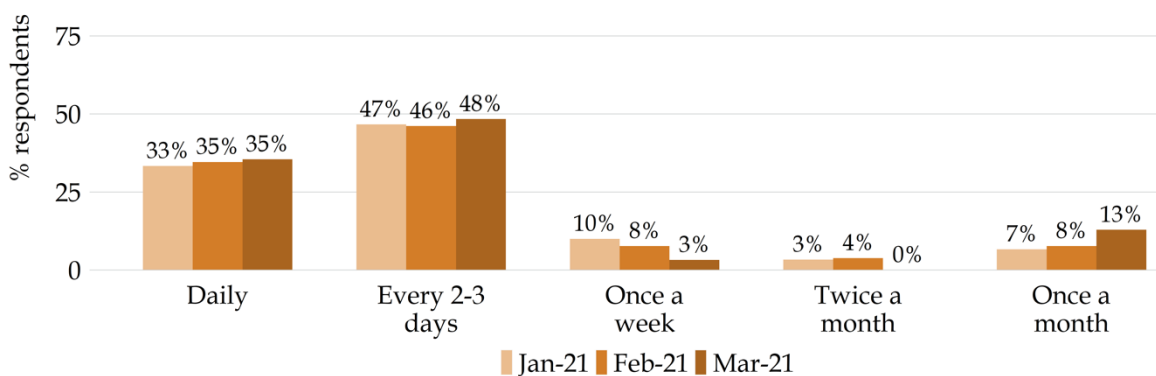


Fig. 9 Consumers: Frequency of visiting the markets

shopping in the market daily increased slightly (33% Jan; 35% Feb/Mar) and the share of consumers only going once per month increased (7% Jan; 8% Feb; 13% Mar). The share of those consumers going once a week decreased (10% Jan; 8% Feb; 3% Mar). Over time, most consumers said the purpose for visiting the market was to buy foods or other goods for themselves or the own family (97% Jan; 92% Feb; 81% Mar). Other reasons including working in the markets (17% Jan; 31% Feb; 23% Mar) and buying food for their own business (17% Jan; 15% Feb; 19% Mar).

3.3 Equity and fairness

From a systems perspective, **equity and fairness** refers to the level or degree of equality and fairness inherent in formal and informal rules and laws. This assessment asked the panel of vendors how difficult it was for them to follow the new rules and regulations put in place due to COVID-19. Between January and March, it became less difficult for most vendors following new rules and regulations (Fig. 10). The share of vendors that found it not very difficult

or not difficult at all to follow the COVID-19 rules still in place in the markets, including the mandate to wear face masks, hand washing, and social distancing in the market space increased (56% Jan; 62% Feb; 80% Mar).

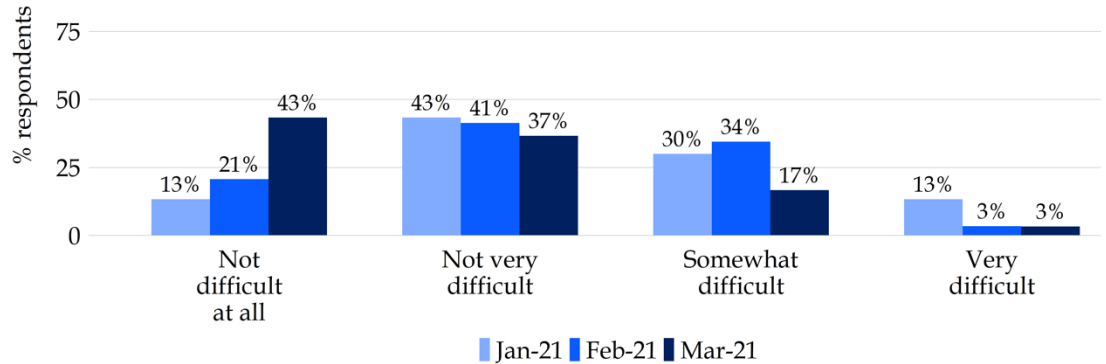


Fig. 10 Vendors: Difficulty following COVID-19 rules

3.4 Cooperation

Cooperation refers to market actors collaborating to achieve a common purpose or function. Cooperation is neither good nor bad and the contribution of cooperation depends on the purpose. Here cooperation was measured asking vendors if they have started sharing resources with other businesses due to COVID-19. Since January, the share of vendors that started sharing resources with other businesses increased (80% in Jan; 93% Feb; 100% Mar). In March all vendors reported to have started sharing resources. The types of shared facilities mentioned by the vendors changed, (Fig. 11). The sharing of transportation was mentioned more often (by 54% Jan; 59% Feb; 63% Mar) as well as the sharing of masks (17% Jan; 22% Feb; 30% Mar).

Despite being mentioned by almost all vendors, sharing new hand washing facilities decreased (96% Jan; 96% Feb; 83% Mar) as did sharing suppliers (58% Jan; 48% Feb; 47% Mar).

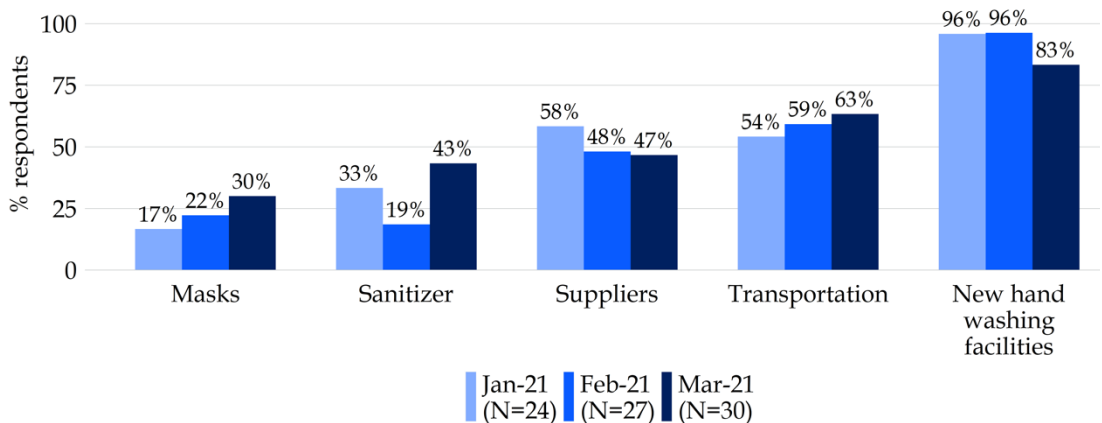


Fig. 11 Vendors: Resources shared with other businesses

3.5 Competition

Competition is defined as rivalry between two or more entities. Like cooperation, competition can be negative or positive. Its contribution to system resilience capacities depends on how and why the entities are competing. Competition in this assessment was measured based on changing vendors practices based on what they had seen of their competitors and on consumers' reasons, trust, and loyalty in the vendors from where they food.

Less than half of the vendors in this panel (47% Jan; 38% Feb; 47% Mar) reported they had changed their business practices based on competitors. In March, those vendors that reported a business practice change due to competitors mainly added the offer of a discount (57%) or services (57%), changed their hygiene concept (57%), the layout of the shop (36%), changed their advertisement (29%) or offered credit (29%). Despite a high share of consumers reporting changes to the food items typically bought, the share did not change much over the three months (87% Jan; 92% Feb; 90% Mar). However, consumers increasingly reported switching from usual to different food (0% Jan; 8% Feb; 14% Mar), and the share of those that reported a decrease in food purchasing declined (88% Jan/Feb; 68% Mar).

The markets under assessment were still the most common places where consumers obtained food. The share of consumers that reported doing most of their food shopping at the markets stayed high (80% Jan; 92% Feb; 87% Mar).

Consumers also mentioned they obtained food from supermarkets (43% Jan; 38% Feb; 42% Mar), small shops (37% Jan; 35% Feb; 19% Mar) or kiosks (47% Jan; 23% Feb; 19% Mar) (Fig. 12).

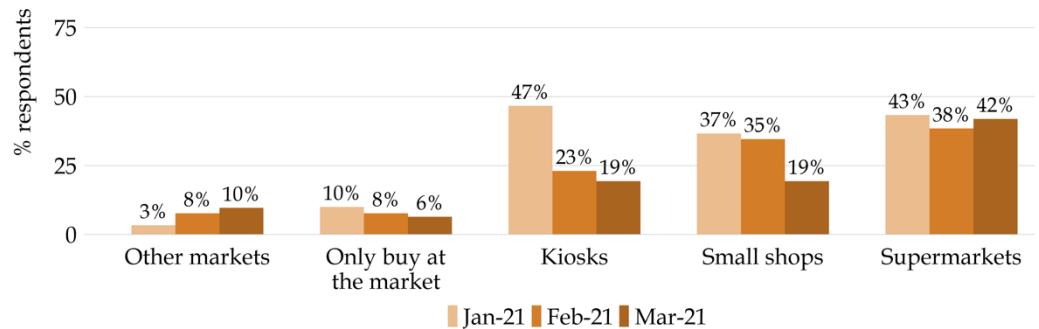


Fig. 12 Vendors: Other sources to buy food from

Reasons for buying food at the two markets were similar between the three rounds (Fig. 13). Major reasons included good prices (83% Jan; 85% Feb; 81% Mar), quality/freshness of food (73% Jan; 62% Feb; 74% Mar), easy access from home (73% Jan; 62% Feb; 61% Mar), and good selection of foods (50% Jan; 38% Feb; 45% Mar).

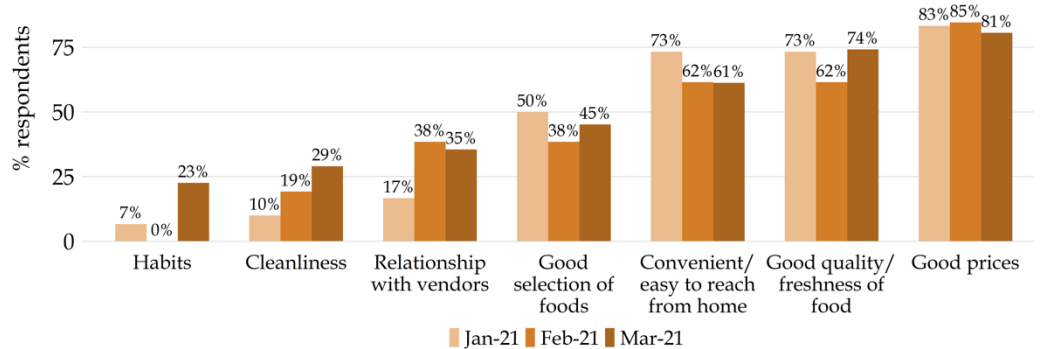


Fig. 13 Consumers: Reasons for choosing to buy food at the market

The level of trust for the vendors that consumers bought food from decreased slightly. While in January, 53% of consumers considered the majority or all of vendors trustworthy, the share slightly increased to 54% in

February but decreased to 42% in March 2021. At the same time, the share of those consumers that said only a few vendors were trustworthy or they are not trustworthy increased (47% Jan; 46% Feb; 58% Mar) (Fig. 14).

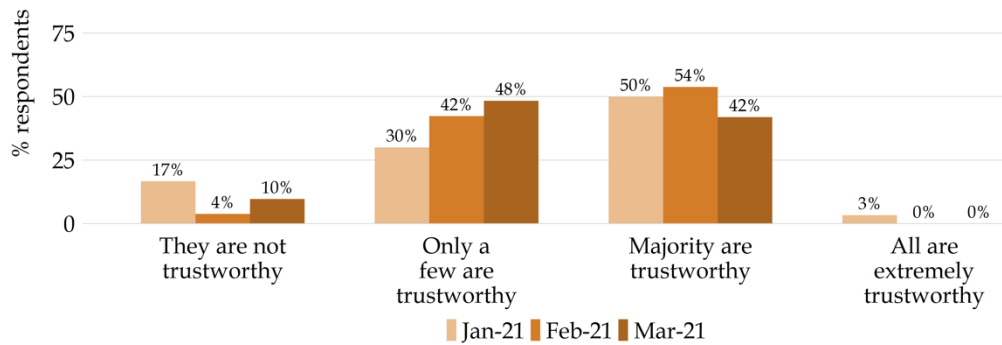


Fig. 14 Vendors: Level of trust for the vendors consumers usually buy food from

For those consumers that only described a few vendors as trustworthy or not at all trustworthy, major reasons included not knowing the vendor well (43% Jan; 25% Feb; 50% Mar), changing quality of food (36% Jan; 25% Feb; 22% Mar) not knowing where the products come from (29% Jan; 33% Feb; 44% Mar), or the vendor using different business methods (29% Jan; 25% Feb; 28% Mar). For those consumers with higher trust in the vendors (stating that majority of vendors or all vendors are trustworthy), major reasons included knowing the vendors well/buying regularly from the same vendor (50% Jan; 86% Feb; 54% Mar), good quality/freshness of foods (44% Jan; 43% Feb; 38% Ma), knowing where products come from (31% Jan; 7% Feb; 8% Mar) or identifying with other customers of the vendor (19% Jan; 29% Feb; 46% Mar).

The decreased level in trust might also explain a decreasing vendor loyalty (Fig. 15). While in January, 67% of consumers bought always or usually from the same vendors the share decreased to 61% in February and to 42% in March. At the same time the share of consumers that visited the same vendor only occasionally or rarely/ or didn't pay attention increased (34% Jan; 39% Feb; 58% Mar).

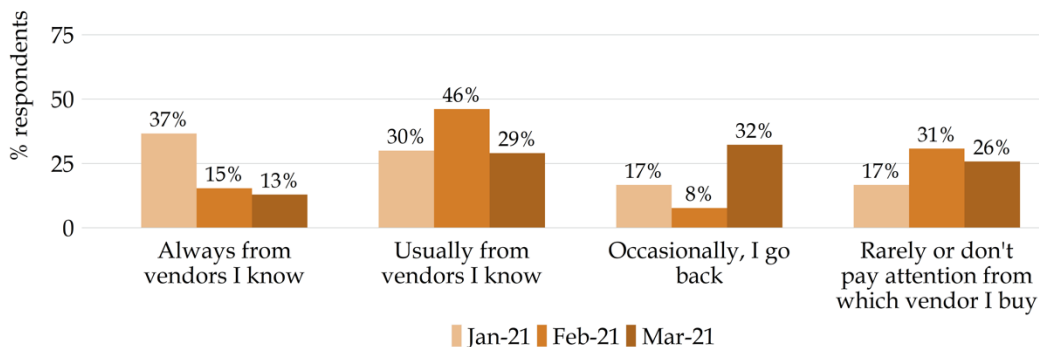


Fig. 15 Consumers: Frequency of buying at the same vendor

3.6 Business strategy

Business practices are oriented toward generating value for customers. They can be investments in understanding customers, in building customer relationships, in tracking customer retention and growth, in investing in staff and firm capacity, and in merit-based hiring. Business strategy in this assessment has been measured based on vendors' business practices, training possibilities and additional funding, as well as consumers' being asked for feedback.

Between January and March 2021, most of the vendors (77% Jan; 83% Feb; 80% Mar) have used business strategies to increase the number of customers and sales during the last 9 months. Fig. 16 shows that most strategies taken included the provision of discount (74% Jan; 67% Feb; 71% Mar), the provision of additional services (43% Jan; 54% Feb; 25% Mar) and the provision of credit (30% Jan; 50% Feb; 33% Mar). In addition, about one third of vendors (30% Jan; 31% Feb; 37% Mar) were aware of business training and support being offered by market authorities due to COVID-19.

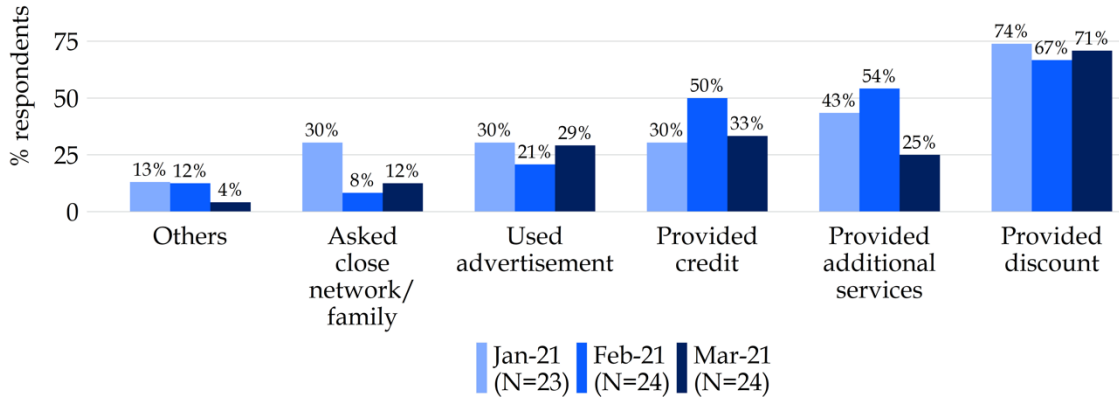


Fig. 16 Vendors: Types of business strategies taken, last 9 months

Of the vendors who reported borrowing money to pay for unexpected expenses due to COVID-19 decreased (63% Jan; 55% Feb; 47% Mar). In March, still almost half of the vendors stated to borrow money. Fig. 17 depicts the diverse sources for this money which changed. Over the three months, the major sources mentioned were informal cooperatives (53% Jan; 75% Feb; 79% Mar), friends (32% Jan; 25% Feb; 14% Mar), and other businesses (11% Jan; 31% Feb; 14% Mar). Only very few consumers (3% Jan; 4% Feb; 6% Mar) have been asked by market officials or vendors to provide feedback.

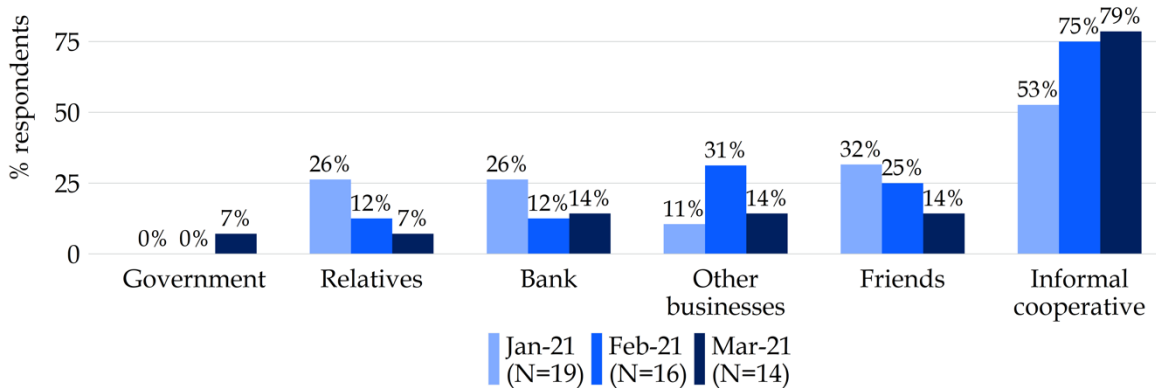


Fig. 17 Vendors: Source of borrowed money due to COVID-19

4. FOOD PRICES

Tracking food prices is of great value to any market system to respond quickly to any dynamics in the food system. In this assessment, prices of different nutritious commodities and food groups have been tracked over time. Between November 2020 and March 2021, pulse prices (green grams, lentils, and beans rosecoco) decreased slightly by -1%, -2% and -8%, respectively (Fig. 18).

Vegetables assessed included kales (sukumawiki), green cabbage, and carrots (Fig. 19 Prices for selected vegetables, in KES/kg). While between November 2020 and March 2021 prices for cabbage and carrots increased by 24% and 34%, respectively, kales cost decreased by 34%. While this price fluctuation is mainly due to seasonality, varying quality of vegetables also determines the everyday price.

Animal source foods assessed included eggs (Kienyeji), milk (raw/unprocessed), dried fish (omena) and beef (with bones) (Figs. 20 and 21). While egg prices did not increase from November 2020 and to 2021, beef and milk prices increased by 3% and 6%, respectively, and the omena prices decreased by 11%. Prices for omena seem to fluctuate, mainly due to limited supply and long supply chain with competing interests, as omena is also used for animal feed.

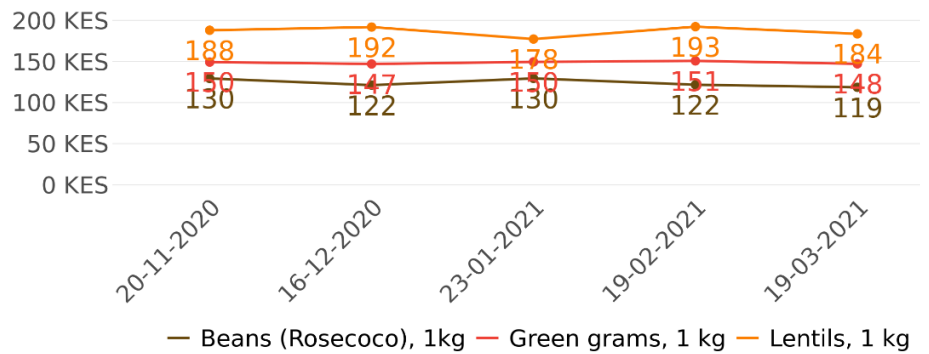


Fig. 18 Prices for selected pulses, in KES/kg

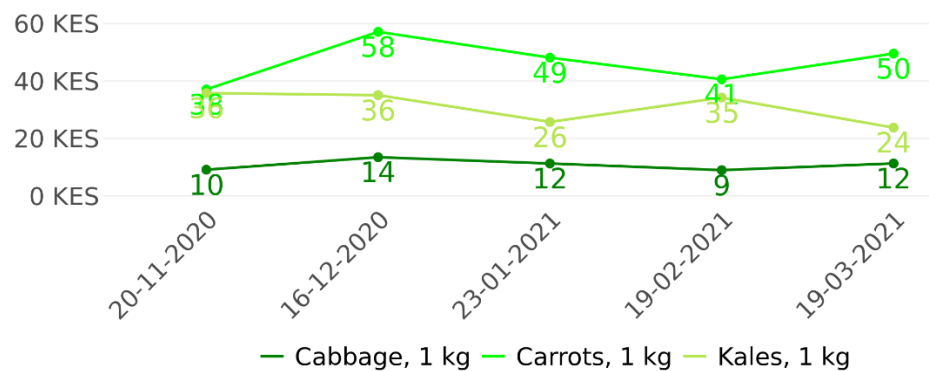


Fig. 19 Prices for selected vegetables, in KES/kg

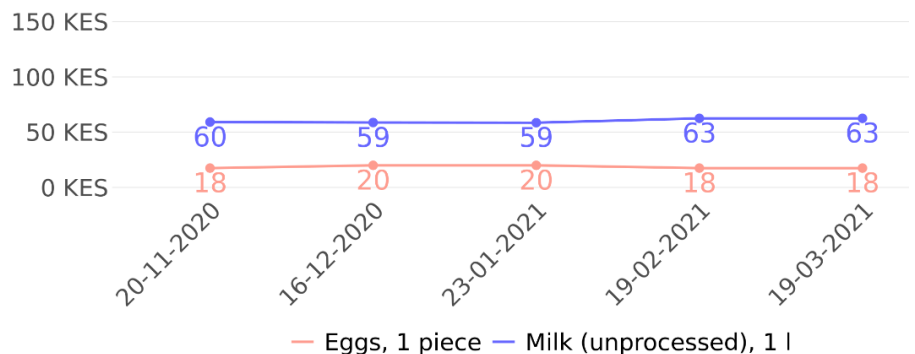


Fig. 20 Prices for eggs and milk, in KES

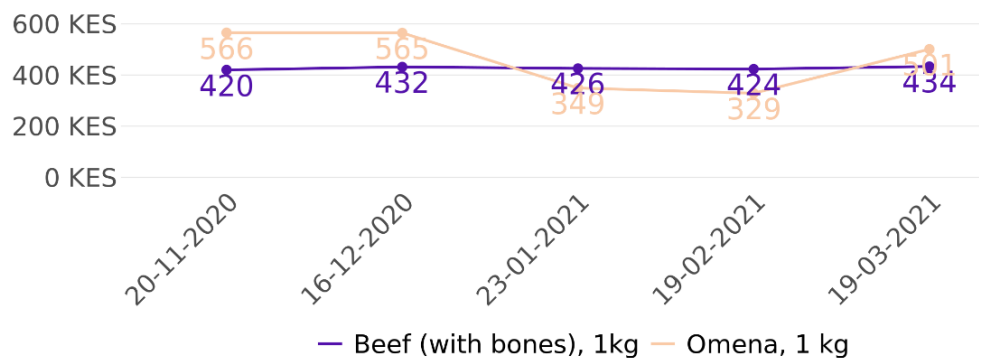


Fig. 21 Prices for meat and fish, in KES

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

VENDOR (n=30)	CONSUMER (n=30)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 71% of vendors are female (Tab. 1). 57% of the vendors attended primary education. Most vendors in the panel sold vegetables, fruits, legumes, grains, also in the form of pre-packed, fresh fruits (sliced mango, melon, banana) and vegetables (packs of carrots, peas, squash etc.). 73% of vendors have been operating in the market for 10 years or longer and (as of March 2021) 73% of vendors aim to continue with their business even if COVID-19 continues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60% of the consumers in this panel are female. 63% of consumers stated to have attended secondary education or higher. 57% of consumers lived in Machakos or Thika for over 10 years. Most of consumers have been financially affected by COVID-19 throughout the months (93% Jan; 96% Feb; 97% Mar); 90% of those negatively affected reported a reduced income through fewer business opportunities; 43% of those negatively affected decreased the consumption of food (as of March 2021).

Tab. I Characteristics of respondents in this panel

	VENDORS (n=30)	CONSUMERS (n=30)
Gender (male female)	29% 71%	40% 60%
<i>Highest level of school attended</i>		
Primary school	57%	37%
Secondary school	27%	43%
Higher education	17%	20%
<i>Length of operating in the market (vendor) Length of living in Thika or Machakos (consumer)</i>		
<1 year	7%	10%
1-3 years	3%	7%
3-5 years	7%	10%
5-10 years	10%	17%
>10 years	73%	57%

6. METHODS ASSESSING MARKET CHARACTERISTICS UNDER COVID-19, RESILIENCE, AND FOOD PRICES

Insights into **market system resilience** were based on interviews with 30 consumers and 30 vendors from two traditional markets in Machakos and Kiambu county, who were interviewed between 13 January and 31 March 2021.^{2,3} The panel of vendors and consumers was purposefully selected from Marikiti and Madaraka markets in Machakos and Kiambu county, respectively in December 2020 and validated in January 2021. The panel was based on the respondent's gender and age profiles, which were previously examined in rapid assessments (see below). The same panel of consumers and vendors are interviewed monthly via phone interviews and following a structured questionnaire.

² The panel included 30 consumers and vendors in January. In February, due to attrition the number of consumers and vendors was reduced to 26 and 20, respectively. These respondents were replaced so that the panel size of consumers and vendors in March 2021 was 31 and 30, respectively.

³ Due to unavailability of respondents one interview for the round in March was taken on 14 April.

The [USAID Market System Resilience Framework](#) defines market system resilience as “...the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.” For market systems, resilience further includes the ability to allocate resources, draw on optimal resources, and innovate to solve problems in the face of shocks and stresses. This report uses six of the eight domains highlighted in the USAID framework to characterize resilience capacities (connectivity, diversity, equity and fairness, cooperation, competition, business strategy) with both fast and slow indicators.

In addition to data on market system resilience, this report conducted a **rapid assessment** of 1,264 consumers and 1,271 vendors from Marikiti and Madaraka markets. Approximately every two weeks, 40 consumers and 40 vendors in each market were randomly selected for surveys. All assessments combined responses from the vendors and consumers in both markets, and all surveys were conducted in adherence with global guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and control. Data included in this report (“[Market characteristics and changes due to COVID-19](#)”) were collected between 7 September 2020 and 19 March 2021. All data were collected via Open Data Kit and stored on KoBo Toolbox; Stata version 15.1 was used for data analysis.

Food prices for selected nutritious foods (pulses, vegetables, and animal source foods) were collected approximately every two weeks from each market. Prices were assessed on 20 November 2020, 16 December, 13 January, 19 February and 19 March 2021. Foods were selected based on its nutritive value, availability, and cultural acceptance. Data for foods were collected in standard units (kilogram, liter, or piece), and prices were averaged using the Kenyan Shilling ([500 NGN \$\triangleq\$ 1.26 US\\$](#)). For each round and food item, three comparative prices from three vendors in each market were collected by trained enumerators at similar times and days of the week. The weight of pulses, fish, and vegetables were collected together with the price assessment, and average weights for standard units were then calculated. Although a direct comparison between the assessed commodities and the national price statistics by the [Kenya Bureau of Statistics \(KNBS\)](#) is not possible, EatSafe tracked and compared official bi-monthly price data and compared the national assessments to the average monthly prices of this assessment, allowing for validation of these data.

7. GAIN’S COVID-19 RESPONSE

The necessary COVID-19 lockdowns 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. The KFMW program consists of five workstreams:

1. Building resilience of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
2. Maintaining and reinforcing efforts in Large-Scale Food Fortification
- 3. Ensuring food markets stay open and are operating safely**
4. Investing in nutrition security for key workers in the food system
5. Supporting effective policymaking and coordination during the pandemic

Through KFMW, EatSafe is working to better understand the rapidly changing situation in traditional food markets from the vendor and consumer perspective under workstream 3.

8. EATSAFE DATA COLLECTION FOR MUNICIPALITIES

EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food, is a five-year project aiming to enable lasting improvements in the safety of nutritious foods in traditional markets by focusing on the consumer. The COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the world into an unprecedented global health crisis. Difficult to manage at the best of times, traditional markets are generally crowded with customers and vendors creating ideal conditions for transmission of the virus. When market vendors and other food system workers cannot do their jobs, increased food prices and/or food shortages are likely to result in reducing demand for fresh, nutritious foods and eroding market resilience. Furthermore, real, and perceived risks can undermine consumer trust in the health and safety of food markets.

EatSafe's COVID-19 response is working to better understand the rapidly changing situation in traditional food markets from the vendor and consumer perspective. Through bi-weekly market surveys and monthly key informant interviews, EatSafe is assessing the accessibility of safe nutritious food, availability of health and safety information and the resilience of traditional markets. EatSafe will continue to use and disseminate results to help ensure food markets remain open, that safe, nutritious food is available under COVID-19 and to support future programming for safe and resilient nutritious food markets.

Suggested citation: Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. 2021. COVID-19 Traditional Market Report. Kenya Issue #2. March 2021. A USAID EatSafe Project Report.

This report is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of GAIN and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

