

**EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe,
Nutritious Food**

Leveraging Consumer Demand to Drive Food Safety Improvements in Traditional Markets – An Activity Implementation Guide

July 2024

Feed the Future's Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food (EatSafe) sought to engage and empower consumers and vendors to demand safer nutritious foods in traditional markets in low- and middle-income countries. Operating in Nigeria and Ethiopia, EatSafe began operations with a formative research phase, developing a nuanced understanding of the local context within EatSafe's target markets, followed by an intervention implementation, research, and learning phase.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EatSafe	Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food
GAIN	Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
LMICs	Low and middle income countries
KAP	Knowledge, attitudes, and practices
MII	Market Improvement Initiative
MIP	Market Improvement Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Feed the Future's Evidence and Action Towards Safe Nutritious Food (EatSafe) aimed to increase consumer demand for safe, nutritious foods in traditional food markets in Nigeria and Ethiopia. This document details recommended approaches for implementing activities aimed at enhancing food safety in traditional markets through demand-driven behavior change, drawing on insights and lessons learned from EatSafe's activities in these countries.

EatSafe's approach focused on three key elements. The first element, *Motivation and Positive Behavior Change*, involved encouraging and sustaining behaviors that promote food safety. By leveraging psychosocial and emotional mechanisms such as social norms and self-efficacy, the initiative aimed to motivate consumers and vendors to adopt safer food handling practices. The second element, *Best Practices and Simple Technology*, focused on implementing guidelines for habitual food safety behaviors through education and training programs. This included the use of simple, practical tools to improve food safety. The third element, *Enabling Environment*, aimed at creating supportive and collaborative stakeholder networks necessary for food safety improvements within the community.

This guide complements the EatSafe Results Report as it outlines the details of EatSafe approach to building and leveraging demand driven behavior change for food safety in traditional markets, offering insights and best practices from EatSafe's activity implementation in Nigeria and Ethiopia.

I. EATSAFE'S APPROACH TO CREATING CONSUMER DEMAND FOR FOOD SAFETY IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS

Traditional markets are the primary retail destinations for people in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to procure nutrient-rich, locally grown fresh foods, such as animal-source foods, fruits, and vegetables. These markets play crucial roles in local communities and social networks, and they are also key to local economies and livelihood support. However, they are significant sources of foodborne disease in LMICs.

Feed the Future's Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food (EatSafe) focused on traditional markets as intervention points for generating demand to improve the safety of nutritious foods purchased in these markets. While increasing demand cannot improve food safety alone, it was EatSafe's objective to better understand how to leverage consumer and vendor demand as a potential complementary intervention to critical food safety improvements along the value chains. Generating demand requires motivating and incentivizing people to make new and different choices. The most effective interventions tend to leverage emotions to incentivize behavior change, as knowledge acquisition alone is not sufficient for sustained and significant change. Addressing motivation and positive behavior change involves using psychosocial and emotional mechanisms, such as social norms and self-efficacy, to encourage people to make sustained improvements in their decision-making.

Consumers do not make purchasing choices in isolation. Even the most informed and motivated consumers cannot change the food safety landscape if vendors are not prepared and supported to meet the demand. EatSafe's baseline market and KAPs (Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices) assessments in Nigeria and Ethiopia revealed that vendors lacked knowledge of safer food handling practices and access to the appropriate technology needed to meet the anticipated rise in consumer demand for safe food. Furthermore, both consumers and vendors operate within a traditional market and broader enabling environment that impacts their ability to influence the demand and supply of safer food. The enabling environments in Nigeria and Ethiopia were either lacking or not conducive to food safety.

The EatSafe design phase drew on a [framework](#), visualized as a "[three-legged stool](#)," which includes the three key factors needed to improve food safety in traditional markets:

- **Motivation and Positive Behavior Change (Motivation):** Encouraging and sustaining behavior changes that promote food safety.
- **Best Practices and Simple Technology (Capacity):** Implementing guidelines for habitual food safety behaviors through education and training programs, reinforced by behavior change programs. Technologies range from costly cold storage to simple tools like tables, cleanable containers, or gloves.
- **An Enabling Environment (Opportunity):** Creating sociopolitical contexts, institutions, and structures that support food safety improvements. This includes physical infrastructure (e.g., water, sanitation, waste disposal), social networks (e.g., community-based organizations or vendor associations), governance (e.g., public and private sector governance structures), and policy (e.g., the existence of reference food safety regulations).

EatSafe designed and implemented the following activities in select traditional markets in [Nigeria](#) and [Ethiopia](#), guided by formative research, local assessments, budget, and timeline:

- [Communication Campaign](#)
- [In-Market Information Center](#)
- [Food Safety Vendor Training](#)
- [Food Safety Brand \(Signaling\)](#)
- [Collective Action Networks](#)

These activities overlapped and reinforced each other within the "three-legged stool" framework, creating a holistic and comprehensive approach to building demand for food safety. The following sections of this Guide describe their implementation in either Nigeria or Ethiopia or both, along with lessons learned that can inform, shape, and support future initiatives that seek to leverage consumer demand for food safety in traditional markets.

For each activity, we share:

- Activity definition
- Outcomes and objectives
- Key steps and implementation considerations
- An EatSafe case study



2. COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN

2.1. DEFINITION

Behavior change can be triggered by peer pressure and changing community norms. There is substantial evidence that communication tools are effective in encouraging these changes and educating the public. Studies have shown that communication campaigns can significantly influence social norms and promote healthier behaviors across various contexts. A food safety communication campaign can help to motivate consumers to identify and prioritize purchasing food from vendors who adopt safer food handling and vending practices in traditional markets. By generating interest, knowledge, and positive feelings toward food safety, the campaign encourages consumers to make safer choices in the traditional market.

2.2. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of a communication campaign is to engage the audience with new information, highlight its importance to their lives, and ultimately motivate positive behavior change. The key outcomes of a food safety communication campaign are:

- Consumers use food-safety cues to choose food vendors in traditional markets.
- Consumers use food-safety cues to choose food.

- Consumers increase their communication with vendors, family and friends, and relevant stakeholders about food safety.
- Consumers increase their own risk mitigation actions post-purchase.
- Consumers feel empowered to demand safe and nutritious food when making purchases in the market.
- Consumers seek more information and resources on food safety.

The audience for a communication campaign is the public, including consumers, vendors, and government stakeholders. However, the campaign can tailor messages to specific subsets of the public, such as caregivers, women, youth, and others as identified by the program research and goals.

2.3. KEY STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following steps and elements should be considered when producing and implementing the communication campaign:

Budget and Resource Allocation: Secure funding to cover all aspects of the campaign, including channel analysis, production, distribution, marketing, and feedback and evaluation. While each of these components can be simple, none should be omitted. Depending on the country, dissemination channels and the scale of the intervention, costs can be significant and should be explored during design.

Scheduling: Schedule the campaign to coincide with peak times and relevant local holidays for maximum visibility and engagement. For example, the campaign would resonate strongly during holidays when community members prepare large family gatherings and meals, making the issue of foodborne disease more salient. Avoid times when the audience is focused on other messages (e.g., elections).

Audience Research and Segmentation: Identify and understand the target audience's demographics, behaviors, literacy level, and media consumption habits. Segment the audience to tailor messages effectively for different subgroups such as caregivers, women, youth, market vendors, and other relevant demographics such as ethnic groups with different languages and customs, as needed by the scope of the project.

Message Development:

- **Core Message:** Develop a clear and compelling core message that emphasizes the importance of food safety and the impact of foodborne disease on health and family budget. Avoid abstract and scientific concepts; instead, focus on practical, simple, and relevant messages. Balance scientific food safety principles with the

daily challenges the community faces or might face trying to avoid foodborne disease.

- **Behavioral Insights:** Based on audience research, use appropriate behavioral mechanisms to guide the creation of messages that resonate with and can motivate the target audience to change behavior.

Media Channel Selection: Within your budget, select a combination of traditional (TV, radio, print) and digital (social media, websites, mobile apps) media channels to reach a broad audience. Consider experiential campaigns and in-person interactions. Base the selection on the community's literacy levels and the most widely used media channels.



Content Creation:

- **Engaging Content:** Produce engaging content, including visuals, videos, audio messages, games, and other interactive elements. In the context of food safety, even graphic or unsettling content can be compelling and motivating, addressing the good, the bad, and the ugly of foodborne diseases directly.
- **Cultural Relevance:** Ensure content is culturally sensitive and relevant to the target audience. For example, consider gender dynamics, such as who manages the family budget, shops for food in the market, and who the market vendors are.
- **Consistency:** Ensure all campaign materials consistently communicate the tone and content of the messages.
- **Social Proof:** Highlight stories of vendors and consumers who practice and benefit from food safety measures and how they overcome food safety challenges.

- **Incentives:** Offer rewards or recognition for vendors who consistently adhere to food safety standards. Emphasize the benefits of attracting more customers as they become more aware of food safety due to the campaign.

Partnerships and Collaborations:

- **Stakeholders:** Engage with key stakeholders such as local organizations, market associations, and government bodies to support and amplify the campaign.
- **Influencers:** Leverage local influencers and community leaders to endorse and disseminate campaign messages.
- **Ambassadors:** Recruit high-performing vendors as ambassadors to promote the campaign.

Frequency and Reach: Ensure frequent dissemination of campaign messages to reinforce learning and behavior change. Plan the campaign to cover peak market times and locations for maximum visibility.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish channels for receiving feedback from the audience. Regularly assess the campaign's impact on consumer behavior and food safety practices through surveys, observational studies, and other evaluation methods. Incorporate feedback from the target audience to refine and improve campaign strategies continuously.

Sustainability and Scalability: Design the campaign with long-term sustainability in mind, ensuring that messages remain relevant and impactful over time, and that there are locally invested partners who can continue the campaign. Plan for the potential expansion of the campaign to other regions or broader audiences.

Regulatory Compliance: Ensure the campaign complies with local regulations, permitting, and laws regarding advertising and public health messaging.

Risk Management: Identify potential risks and challenges that could impact the campaign. Develop strategies to mitigate these risks and ensure the campaign runs smoothly. For example, ensure the campaign gives the voice to consumer and vendor concerns alike to prevent conflict, frustration, and backlash.

By considering these key steps and implementation aspects, a communication campaign can be effectively executed to raise awareness and promote positive behavior change regarding demand for food safety in traditional markets.



2.4. EATSAFE CASE STUDY: SAFE FOOD RADIO SHOW IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, EatSafe aired two seasons (52 episodes) of a weekly radio show, "Sayen Nagari" (*"Buying quality products is like taking your money back home with you"*), along with PSAs and jingles. The show reached 700,000 listeners across two states, and 1,021 listeners called in with their questions and comments during the show.

The 26 one-hour episodes of Season I had three sections:

1. **Pre-recorded fictional radio drama:** Rooted in local stories from the market, this segment used entertainment-education to engage the audience emotionally.
2. **Pre-recorded conversation:** A fictional married couple commented on the events of the drama and discussed food safety through the lens of their own family life.
3. **Live call-in section:** Hosted by a locally notable on-air personality (OAP) with invited expert guests answering caller questions.

Due to a more limited budget and timeline for Season II, and given that the call-in section of the first season was the shortest yet most popular component, the episodes of Season II were produced to include:

1. **Pre-recorded testimonials and Vox-Pops:** Conversations with the local community about food safety topics and challenges.
2. **Live call-in section:** Hosted by a locally notable OAP with invited expert guests answering caller questions.

Implementation Learnings

- **Effective Marketing Strategy:** EatSafe collaborated with local partners to record and frequently air nine radio show endorsements by local leaders, each 15-20 seconds in length. Promoting the show through these ads proved to be an effective marketing strategy. The radio show also promoted other EatSafe activities, such as the Safe Food Stand and APFSAN.
- **Maximizing Reach and Impact:** The show benefited from airing on Vision FM, the most popular radio station in the target states. EatSafe also engaged one of the most popular radio hosts to further enhance the show's reach and impact.
- **Broad Audience Engagement:** The show covered a wide range of food safety topics, from shopping at the market to cooking at home and teaching hygiene to children. This broad focus ensured the show was of interest to a wide audience. During Season I, EatSafe held listener group interviews and analyzed caller comments and questions to better understand which topics resonated the most with listeners and focused on these themes in Season II.
- **Challenges Encountered:**
 - There was a shortage of food safety expert guests available to appear on the show, and some canceled at short notice.
 - Network connectivity issues also resulted in frequent dropped calls during the call-in portion, the most popular segment of the show.
 - The show couldn't air as scheduled a few times due to local and national elections in Nigeria, but the radio stations aired the show during prime time on another day and allocated additional airtime for the EatSafe PSAs.
- **Encouraging Female Participation:** There were significantly fewer female callers than male callers. To encourage more women to call in, efforts were made to invite more female guests to appear on the show.
- **Scheduling:** Splitting the show into multiple seasons allowed for initial learnings to inform content and delivery of the next season, increasing the effectiveness or reach of the effort.



3. IN-MARKET INFORMATION CENTER

3.1. DEFINITION

An Information Center creates a safe and trusted space for consumers and vendors to share food safety information within the market. Its scheduled and recurring presence in the market provides easy access to useful knowledge about food safety for both consumers and vendors. The objective of the Center is to educate and motivate consumers to identify and prioritize purchasing food from vendors who adopt safer food handling and vending practices. Vendors also benefit from access to information, which sets a standard for food safety practices in the market and encourages improved practices.

The technical content available at the stand includes techniques for selecting safer food in the market (trained staff and handouts), personal hygiene (demonstrations and handwashing stations), and culturally relevant, locally specific best practices for safe food handling, preparation, storage, and processing (demonstrations).

Foundational research can provide information on the demographics of the audience, their knowledge gaps and information needs, how to frame materials to facilitate receptivity, and literacy and language considerations.

3.2. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the In-Market Information Center is to provide consumers with easy access to food safety knowledge while they shop for food in the market. It empowers them to choose safer foods in the market, increase personal hygiene, and improve or adopt new skills for safe handling, food preparation, storage, processing, and packaging.

The Center aims to increase the number of consumers and other market actors receiving information on food safety best practices and attending trainings and demonstrations on appropriate postharvest handling. This empowerment through knowledge will reduce negative attitudes towards food safety. Knowledge transfer will occur through peer groups, starting with the local stand staff, who can provide a comfortable and inviting environment to share information. This will facilitate the sharing of information with family members and people of similar backgrounds or identity groups in the community.

Community engagement can also trigger more sustained interest, including market management buy-in and support for the stand's activities during and after the implementation of the intervention.

3.3. KEY STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The following should be considered when organizing and implementing the In-Market Information Center:

Budget for Structure, Staff, and Materials: Secure adequate funding to cover the costs of the stand structure, staffing, educational materials, demonstrations, marketing materials, and operational expenses. Understand whether the stand should be fixed or mobile, and whether donor funding allows for building vs. renting structures.

Scheduled Presence: Ensure the stand has a recurring and predictable presence in the market to build familiarity and trust. This also discourages possible damage to the stand.

Location and Accessibility:

- Position the stand in a high-traffic area of the market to maximize visibility and accessibility for consumers and vendors (i.e., the market, church). However, people stopping by the stand should not impede traffic.

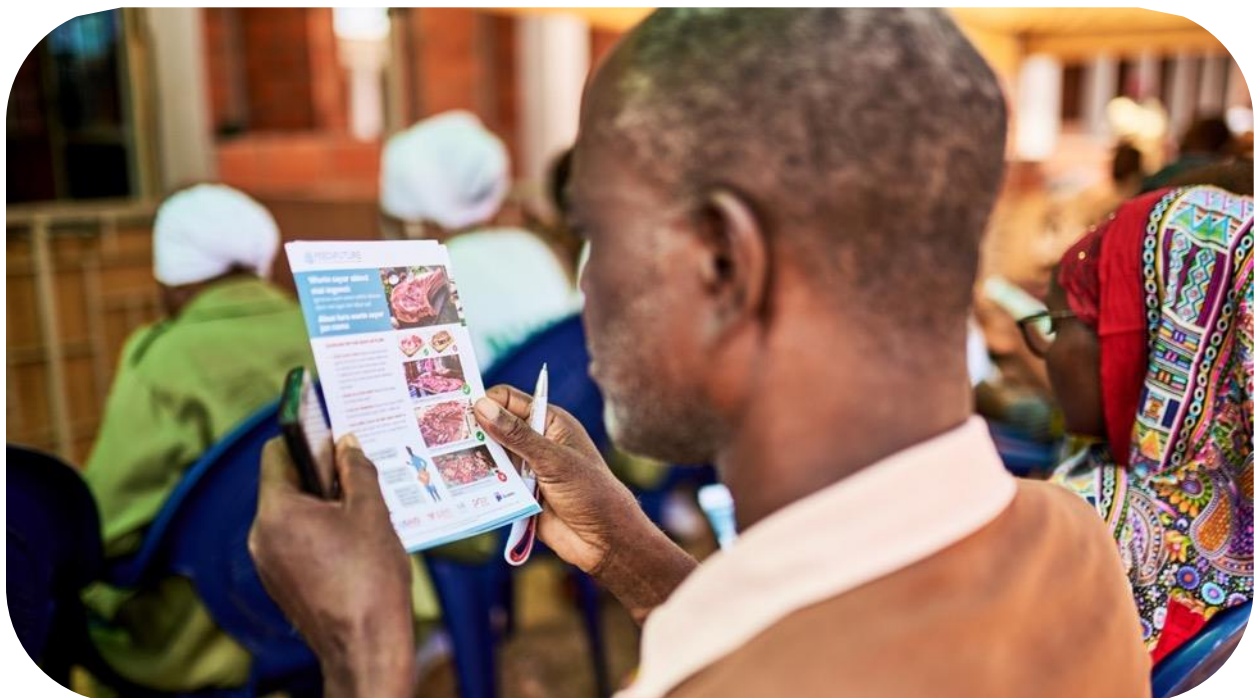
- Identify existing physical structures and determine appropriateness, feasibility, and placement within the market (i.e., safety and comfort for the staff, central location)

Recruitment, Training, Retention of Staff:

- Employ knowledgeable and approachable staff trained in food safety practices and effective communication techniques.
- Compensate staff appropriately to ensure their commitment to the role. Support them throughout the project.
- Train staff on both technical and soft skills (food safety technical content, public speaking, individual engagement, cultural sensitivity, etc.)

Educational Materials:

- Provide clear and culturally appropriate and practical educational materials, including handouts, posters, and brochures, covering key topics like food selection, personal hygiene, and food handling.
- Materials should be easy to understand, engaging, and commensurate to literacy levels (e.g., figures vs. text). Pilot materials with audience representatives.
- Materials should be in multiple relevant languages, and images should reflect multiple local ethnicities (if applicable).
- Have some materials that people can bring home (e.g., flyers, cards, gadgets, simple but useful tools). These can act as powerful reminders of the messages.



Demonstrations:

- Have stand staff conduct live demonstrations on personal hygiene (e.g., proper handwashing techniques) and safe food handling, preparation, storage, and processing.
- Practical demonstrations provide know-how and increase self-efficacy, while being entertaining. This combination can be more engaging than simply reading a flier.
- Engage champions and local celebrities or popular leaders in live talks or other activities. This will attract attention from shoppers, add an element of entertainment, and/or legitimize the stand activities.

Handwashing Stations and other tools:

- Set up handwashing stations to promote and demonstrate personal hygiene practices. These could be portable or fixed and may increase foot traffic to the stand.
- Have audience touch, use, and become familiar with tools shown in demonstrations or regular stand operations. This may increase their motivation and comfort in using food safety tools.

Interactive Elements:

- Incorporate interactive elements such as Q&A sessions, games, or quizzes to engage the audience and reinforce learning.
- Schedule interactive activities at multiple times and days to engage different groups.
- Keep activities short so that people can stop by without increasing their shopping time too much.

Feedback Mechanisms: Implement ways to gather feedback from consumers and vendors to continuously improve the content and delivery of information.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement: Involve local community leaders and influencers to endorse and promote the stand activities. Collaborate with local health authorities, market management, and community organizations to support and promote the stand.

Peer Group Involvement: Facilitate peer-to-peer information sharing by encouraging local stand staff to disseminate knowledge within their community networks.

Sustainability: Plan for the long-term sustainability of the stand by securing ongoing funding and resources, and by integrating the stand into existing market structures.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish metrics for monitoring the stand's impact on food safety knowledge and practices among consumers and vendors. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the stand and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and observed outcomes.

Promotion and Awareness: Promote the stand through various channels, such as local radio, social media, and market announcements, to raise awareness and encourage visits.

Flexibility and Adaptability: Be prepared to adapt the stand's activities and materials based on changing needs and feedback from the community.

By integrating these key steps and considerations, the In-Market Information Center can effectively educate and empower consumers and vendors, ultimately motivating them to change their behavior and improving food safety practices in the market.



3.4. EATSAFE CASE STUDY: [SAFE FOOD STAND IN NIGERIA](#)

From October 2022 to November 2023, the EatSafe Safe Food Stand engaged approximately 10,000 people in both Kebbi and Sokoto. A total of 9,130 people visited the Safe Food Stand, with over 7,000 people attending scheduled demonstrations and training. Among all participants, whether ad hoc visitors or those attending scheduled demonstrations, just under half (45%) were women. It is important to consider these categories separately, as many individuals visited the stand and attended demonstrations multiple times.

The stands operated six days a week, staffed by five full-time employees. They conducted weekly demonstrations in the markets. At the end of the project, both stands were adopted by the local governments and market authorities, who assumed responsibility for staffing and operational costs, allowing their activities to continue beyond the project's duration.





4. FOOD SAFETY TRAINING

4.1. DEFINITION

Food safety training for market vendors and other market actors involves transferring practical knowledge to enable vendors to carry out food handling best practices. The training should not only impart knowledge but also motivate trainees to adopt improved practices by presenting a clear business case and highlighting how enhanced food safety can help their customers and families avoid illnesses and increase business by attracting new and returning satisfied customers.

Food safety training for vendors in traditional markets can help make foods safer, thus protecting consumers from foodborne illnesses and building trust in local products. A training program should provide essential knowledge and practices to maintain high standards of food safety and hygiene in traditional markets.

While the primary focus of food safety training should be on food vendors, it can also include other relevant stakeholders depending on the chosen interventions (market management, consumers, health authorities, suppliers, etc.). Training should be designed with an understanding of the specific motivating forces or drivers of the audience, such as protecting their families, attracting customers, or avoiding government fines.

Foundational research can provide information on the demographics of the audience, their objectives for attending training, how to frame training to facilitate receptivity, and literacy and language considerations. Insights into their psychosocial characteristics can also inform strategies to facilitate receptivity.

4.2. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the vendor training program is two-fold: to build the capacity of vendors to adopt food safety best practices and technologies in traditional markets, and to motivate vendors to adopt and continue implementing these best practices after the training is complete. Key outcomes include:

- Vendors are motivated to adopt safer food handling and preparation practices.
- Vendors gain a better understanding of their responsibility to ensure the sale of safe food to their customers.
- Other market actors who are trained become increasingly aware of the importance of safe food handling and preparation.
- Trainees develop new habits that promote improved food safety behaviors both in the market and at home.
- Trained vendors can participate in programs that make them more visible to buyers.
- Training results in a safer food environment, reduced health risks for consumers, and enhanced trust in traditional market vendors.

4.3. KEY STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Vendors in traditional markets are micro-businesses. This is a crucial consideration when designing a training program. A food safety training program should meet vendors where they are and, as much as possible, should not interrupt their business as it contributes to their livelihood. Using this as a foundation, below are EatSafe's recommended food safety training considerations for traditional market food vendors.

Needs Assessment: Conduct a needs assessment to understand the specific challenges and requirements of market vendors regarding food safety practices.

Customized Curriculum: Develop a curriculum tailored to the local context, incorporating relevant food safety standards and practices specific to the market environment. Include practical and hands-on training modules.

Interactive Learning Methods:

- Utilize interactive methods such as demonstrations, role-playing, and group discussions to engage participants and reinforce learning.
- Work with small groups of vendors to balance individual engagement, ability to answer everyone's questions, peer accountability, and social incentives to attend.

Training Toolkit: Provide a food safety starter kit containing tools, materials, and supplies to support the implementation of best practices. Items should be distributed during training sessions, aligned with the topics covered, and be economical and locally sourced for easy post-training access.



Flexible Scheduling and Accessibility:

- Design training sessions to fit into the vendors' schedules, such as early mornings, late evenings, or during slow business hours, to minimize disruption.
- Conduct training within the market or nearby locations to make it easily accessible for vendors.

Short and Focused Sessions: Break training into short, focused modules that can be delivered over several sessions, making it easier for vendors to attend without sacrificing significant business time. Ensure each session has clear, actionable takeaways that vendors can implement immediately.

Market Infrastructure: The training should use available infrastructure within the market area, such as the different surfaces available in the market, food handling materials, food commodity and other resources that make learning more efficient for the vendors.

Incentives and Recognition:

- **Participation Incentives:** Offer incentives such as certificates, recognition, or small rewards for participation and completion of the training.
- **Visibility Programs:** Encourage trained vendors to participate in programs that highlight their commitment to food safety, making them more attractive to customers. If not available, provide social recognition for completing the training (e.g., award ceremony or ribbon to showcase at the stall).



Community Involvement: Involve respected local leaders and successful vendors as trainers or endorsers to build trust and credibility. Encourage peer-to-peer learning and support networks among vendors.

Supportive Materials:

- **Take-Home Resources:** Provide easy-to-understand, practical materials that vendors can refer to after the training, such as checklists, posters, and brochures.
- **Visual Aids:** Use visual aids and demonstrations to cater to varying literacy levels.

Continuous Support and Follow-Up:

- **Follow-Up Sessions:** Schedule follow-up sessions to reinforce training, address challenges, and provide ongoing support.
- **Helpline:** Establish a helpline or support desk for vendors to ask questions and seek advice after the training.

Certification Process: Clearly define who is eligible for the certificate. Ensure proper documentation and record-keeping.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement mechanisms to collect feedback from vendors to continuously improve the training program. Monitor changes in vendors' practices and the resulting impact on food safety to evaluate the effectiveness of the training through spot checks and observations.

Cultural and Linguistic Relevance: Ensure the training content is culturally sensitive and relevant to the local context and practices. Provide training and materials in the local language(s) to ensure comprehension. Pay attention to correct meaning of the translated technical food safety terms, as sometimes one-to-one translation is not possible.

Partnerships and Collaboration:

- Collaborate with local health authorities, market associations, and community organizations to support and promote the training.
- Secure funding and resources to sustain the training program and provide necessary materials.

By integrating these key steps and implementation considerations, the food safety training program can effectively meet the needs of vendors in traditional markets while minimizing disruption to their livelihoods, ultimately improving food safety practices, and enhancing consumer trust.



4.4. EATSAFE CASE STUDY: VENDOR TRAINING IN ETHIOPIA

EatSafe’s Vendor Training Intervention aimed to improve vendors’ food safety knowledge and practices so they can respond to consumer demand for safer foods.

EatSafe partnered with the Hawassa University College of Medicine and Health Sciences to develop a cadre of 25 student trainers through a “train the trainer” model who then trained vegetable vendors on food safety best practices. EatSafe trained a total of 188 vendors. Approximately half of the participants in EatSafe’s training program were informal or unregistered vendors who lacked a permanent location in the market. EatSafe provided each vendor with a toolkit that included food safety essentials including a plastic container, a packet of detergent, and two buckets. EatSafe’s eight training modules were covered over 14 sessions in the first round, then extended to 16 sessions in second. Nearly all (92%) of vendors attended at least 75% of the training sessions during the entire training program.

Implementation Learnings

- **Food safety content:** After a rigorous review of food safety training programs and materials, EatSafe consolidated and prioritized a list focused on the best food safety practices relevant to vendors in traditional markets. These included the 5 CLEANS (Hands, Water, Tools, Surfaces, Clothes and Cloths) and 4 SAFES (Storage, Sorting, Separating, Sanitizing). Each training module focused on one of these aspects as well as providing the foundational knowledge on food safety and the risk of unsafe foods. In addition to discussing the best practices and how they make food safer, the training also incorporated hands-on activities so that vendors could put into practice their new knowledge with support from the trainer.
- **Training Techniques:** Market vendors responded well to practical, participatory, and motivational training activities. Market visits illustrated food safety behaviors in a practical way, while fostering peer-to-peer learning among trainees proved effective. Training vendors by commodity type (e.g., grains, meat, vegetables) allowed for more targeted and robust sessions. This approach helped participants relate better to each other and cover specific information relevant to their commodities. After the training, participants continued sharing lessons with others, and some even volunteered to be food safety champions in the market.
- **Location and logistics:** EatSafe's market vendor training highlighted the need for short, scheduled sessions near the market to minimize lost revenue and time away from stalls. Training can either be outside the market for a quiet environment or within the market on the "slow days" to avoid business disruption, though the latter may have more distractions. In-market training helps vendors immediately apply food safety practices. Understanding vendor preferences for training participation will help determine the location. Sessions should align with vendors' working hours, and vendors should give consent before training.
- **Literacy is** a key consideration in designing the approach and the materials. Vendors had a lower literacy in general than other audiences.
- **Trainee recognition:** Training participants were recognized for their time and effort and were awarded certificates of completion. Additionally, there was a commitment of continued support, through follow-up technical visits and future trainings, which contributed to the sense of recognition.



5. FOOD SAFETY BRAND

5.1. DEFINITION

A Food Safety Brand provides customers with a simple visual cue to identify vendors who prioritize food safety. This visual cue not only attracts more customers but also incentivizes vendors to complete food safety training. A Brand embodies values and outcomes important to customers, helping to build trust and loyalty when they experience its benefits.

Vendors undergo rigorous training on key elements of food safety and are awarded a certificate upon completion. Those who enroll in the Brand receive a package of branded items, including an apron, cap, bunting, and bin. These items serve as a visual cue to consumers, signaling that these vendors can be trusted to handle food safely. By enrolling in the Brand, vendors commit to implementing safer food handling practices and agree to third-party monitoring.

Additionally, an in-market campaign is conducted to raise awareness of the Brand and the importance of food safety among consumers. This campaign influences their vendor selection process by clearly indicating which vendors practice safe food handling.

5.2. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

Consumers and vendors value and trust having a brand that helps them prioritize safer purchases and signals vendors' efforts to improve food safety practices. A Brand can create pull for safer food through two routes: (1) by training vendors on best practices for food safety (linking a Brand to the training intervention described above) and (2) through campaign to create consumer awareness for the brand and its value proposition. By equipping traditional market vendors with the skills needed to uptake safe food handling practices, and by creating a consumer signal through a Brand, the intention is that this creates a pipeline of consumers seeking to purchase safer food. The desired outcomes of a Brand activity are:

- Consumers understand what the brand represents.
- Consumers buy from branded vendors.
- Consumers seek to protect brand standards.
- Brand creates customer loyalty.
- Vendors are incentivized to use better food handling/storage practices.
- Sales are positively affected by brand.
- Vendors seek opportunities for further engagement to promote the brand or other stakeholder groups (e.g., Association)
- Vendors invest in improved equipment and/or additional training to better ensure food safety

5.3. KEY STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

To successfully implement a Brand activity, consider the following:

Vendor Training, Certification, Enrollment:

- Develop a comprehensive training program covering essential food safety practices at point of sale (see Training Intervention above).
- Certify vendors upon successful completion of the training.
- Establish a clear process for vendors to opt into the brand after training.
- Draft vendor agreements and commitments to ensure adherence to brand standards.
- Show or provide a direct economic value link to vendors' livelihoods to underscore the intervention's benefits and encourage participation.

Brand Development:

- Engage local communities and consumers through surveys, focus groups, and co-creation workshops to identify insights and their understanding of food safety and its benefits to consumers.
- Collaborate with local marketing and design experts to design the brand identity, including tone, logo, colors, messaging, and brand promise.
- Develop marketing strategy in collaboration with a local marketing agency, including key results, channels, messages, and activities to be undertaken at the marketplace.
- Develop necessary collateral materials to implement the campaign, including brochures, banners, and activity materials.

Prototyping and Testing: Develop prototypes/stimulus to capture the form and delivery of the intervention. Conduct pre-testing exercises to gather feedback from consumers and vendors.

Branded Items Distribution:

- Produce and procure branded items such as aprons, caps, buntings, and bins.
- Ensure timely and fair distribution logistics to vendors, considering holidays and public events that influence the calendar.
- Ensure sufficient supplies to re-issue items due to wear-and-tear or loss.



Third-Party Compliance Monitoring:

- Select reliable monitoring organizations, considering stakeholder availability and reliability.
- Develop key performance indicators based on strategy and campaign outcomes.
- Determine the frequency and methods of monitoring.
- Set up reporting and compliance mechanisms to ensure ongoing adherence to food safety practices.

In-Market Brand Awareness Campaign:

- Identify the appropriate days, times, and market location for your campaign to ensure maximum exposure to consumers.
- Secure support and approval from market authorities for the campaign.
- Undertake campaign activities that will increase consumer understanding about the Brand and its significance.

Feedback and Evaluation:

- Implement mechanisms for collecting feedback from vendors and consumers.
- Evaluate the brand's performance using key performance indicators (KPIs) such as brand recognition, compliance levels among vendors, consumer sentiment, engagement, and referral metrics.
- Re-train vendors as needed and in cases of repeated non-compliance, un-enroll vendors. Develop continuous improvement strategies based on feedback and evaluations.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Involve key stakeholders in shaping the brand concept and seek their input and feedback.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure local stakeholders can sustain the Brand.

By incorporating these key steps and considerations in a sequential manner, the brand activity can effectively engage vendors, enhance food safety practices, and build consumer trust in traditional markets.



5.4. EATSAFE CASE STUDY: [THE SAFE FOOD BRAND IN NIGERIA](#)

EatSafe implemented Brand activity in Nigeria in collaboration with a local communication and marketing agency, [Wandievillle](#). The term "food safety" was synonymous with cleanliness, and the benefits for shoppers, mostly men, were "money saved" and a "happy wife." These ideas were incorporated into the brand's name, key messages, and tagline.

Only vendors who had participated in EatSafe's food safety training program and agreed to meet the compliance measures outlined in the training were able to opt-in to the Brand. Approximately 75% of the trained vendors opted into the Brand program, totaling 279 Branded vendors. Vendors were then given a package of branded material (apron, cap, tarp, bin) to wear and display in their stalls that served as the visual cue for consumers when shopping.

In-Market Consumer Brand Awareness Campaign

EatSafe deployed two In-Market Consumer Campaigns, each lasting 5 weeks, which included dramas, games, and influencers to raise awareness of the Brand and educate

consumers on the importance of food safety, especially men, who prioritize food quality, and who may be time limited to make lengthy assessments of vendor products. Working with market management enabled the team to secure a good location for in-market activities.

EatSafe surveyed 202 customers, with over 90% indicating a preference to shop from a Branded vendor. Customers reported purchasing more food from Branded vendors once they understood the significance of the Brand.



EatSafe Compliance Activities

EatSafe's compliance system categorizes branded vendors into groups: gold, silver, and bronze according to the following criteria:

- Follow food safety training guidelines
- Adhere to brand rules;
- Agree to random spot checks; and
- Participate in refresher training if found non-compliant.

Vendors were observed once per month for nine months to verify their Brand compliance using a checklist:

- *No waste on ground or on stall surfaces (including food waste)*
- *Food is appropriately separated (food and non-food items like detergents or chemicals stored separately; raw meat separated from vegetables)*
- *No mud/puddles/water poured on floor; no animal blood spilled on ground (except if water runoff is from other shops that vendor cannot control; except when cleaning at end of day)*
- *Work surfaces and surfaces in contact with food are clean (no food juices, no debris, no soil, no animal blood). Observe when the vendor is not actively processing food, only selling.*
- *No animals, pests, or insects seen around the stall or near/on food (flies, rodents, chickens)*
- *Cleaning tools available (cloths, sponges, broom)*
- *Water in washing bucket or spray bottle (if present) is visually clean (clear, not grey or brown, no dirt in water or other visible debris; or vegetable are washed with clean water)*
- *Vendor does not touch food with bare hands after touching dirty items (e.g. money, waste, soiled items) without washing hands in between*



Brand Assets and Campaign Tactics

The brand kit provided to vendors was effective, with the apron being especially practical for keeping vendor clothes clean and helping them stand out from non-branded vendors in the market. Vendors noted, however, they had difficulty maintaining a clean apron throughout the campaign. Providing two aprons to enrolled vendors helped them cycle in a clean apron as needed. The cap had sizing issues and did not work well for all vendors.

From a consumer perspective, the games and dramas included in the in-market activation were a key feature. They attracted crowds and served as an entertaining platform to educate consumers about the practical impact of foodborne diseases and raise awareness about the Brand.

Sustaining the intervention

Maintaining the intervention effectively and sustainably requires some modifications to the current framework. For example, to encourage vendors to continue proper food handling and safety practices, a few high-performing vendors could be selected to voluntarily act as program ambassadors. These ambassadors, guided by the market association, could help train new vendors and re-train non-compliant vendors when necessary. Local government support could further enhance the program's adoption through implementation by market management or vendor/commodity associations. In-market campaigns need to be implemented at minimum frequency of two times per year to ensure brand relevance and consumer engagement with the brand.





6. COLLECTIVE ACTION NETWORKS

6.1. DEFINITION

Networks are a powerful and sustainable intervention that fosters collaboration among stakeholders, builds social capital, and promotes food safety in traditional markets. Networks are a form of collective action, defined as a strategic collaboration where interested parties take joint actions to support shared objectives or issues ([USAID, Collective Action in Programming](#)). Networks, groups, or cooperatives provide a platform for private and public-sector stakeholders to connect, share knowledge and experiences, and collaborate on common issues, such as food safety.

Potential members may include local governments; private sector companies operating in the area; market management; vendor or consumer advocacy associations or representatives thereof; academia, and other interested and relevant local community-based groups (e.g., religious leaders, doctors, women's or youth group, etc.). A lead organization (such as the implementing partner) would support the network in its formation, inviting key community members to join, build capacity among its members, then identify and address food safety challenges in their market. Some of the advantages of implementing a collective action network are:

- **Building Social Capital:** Networks create opportunities for stakeholders to meet like-minded individuals or organizations, fostering social capital. Social capital –

the connections between individuals and groups based on trust, common values, and shared understandings – is crucial for collective action, especially in areas with weak formal institutions.

- **Forms and Functions:** A network could take the form of a vendor association, consumer advocacy group, or food safety alliance. Forming or leveraging an existing community creates awareness, advocates for, and promotes an enabling environment for food safety in traditional markets.
- **Cost-Effective and Sustainable:** Networks are relationship-based interventions that can be cost-effective and sustainable, especially when centered around topics important to their members.
- **Motivating Stakeholders:** Networks can motivate consumers and vendors to play key roles in influencing the environment for improved food safety in traditional markets.
- **Information Dissemination:** Networks can be used to disseminate new information, technologies, or practices. As social capital increases within a group, so does the flow of information, helping to build individual capacity and increase the adoption of new practices.
- **Policy Influence:** By creating momentum within the group, networks can help drive improved local policies that enhance food safety.

6.2. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

As a collective action intervention, the key objectives of a network are to empower local stakeholders to influence their enabling environment and take action for improved food safety in their communities. The expected outcomes are:

- Local stakeholders develop a common understanding of the importance of traditional markets and the food safety-related health risks these markets currently pose to their community.
- Stakeholders are motivated to work together to improve their markets and make food safer for their community.
- Increased trust among members helps unlock public or private funds to make food safety improvements in the market.
- Members create and lead the implementation of an action plan for improved food safety in their local traditional markets.

6.3. KEY STEPS AND IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Initial Invitation: Invite key stakeholders within the community to join. These stakeholders can include market vendors, consumers, local government representatives, and health authorities.

Workshops and Meetings: Organize and facilitate workshops and meetings to present the problem and encourage open discussion. These sessions aim to build a common understanding of food safety-related health risks and the importance of traditional markets. Offer organized food safety training to the group members.

Identification of Local Co-Chair: Identify a local co-chair, likely from the local government, to co-lead the facilitation. This helps ensure local ownership and sustainability of the initiative.

Market Audit: Conduct a market audit to assess the status of the market in terms of infrastructure, usage patterns, and environmental factors affecting food safety. This audit provides a baseline for measuring improvements. If possible, present case studies of other markets that implemented successful changes and highlight lessons learned.

Market Visits: Arrange for network members to visit both the target market and, if possible, to an improved market to showcase differences. These visits help stakeholders visualize potential improvements and motivate them to act.



Development of a Market Improvement Plan: Work with members to facilitate the development of a market improvement plan that details the status and identifies areas needing improvement. This plan should include a priority list of actions and potential funding sources to support these initiatives.

Stakeholder Engagement: Engage stakeholders (both network members as well as external stakeholders) continuously to foster collaboration and build trust. This engagement can help unlock public or private funds to make necessary food safety improvements in the market.

Action Plan Implementation: Support stakeholders in creating and leading the implementation of an action plan for improved food safety in their local traditional markets. This plan should be practical, actionable, and include clear roles and responsibilities.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation to track progress, gather feedback, and make necessary adjustments to the network. Suggested indicators are available in USAID's Collective Action guidance document linked above. This ensures that member feedback is used to continually improve the network.

By incorporating these key steps and considerations, a stakeholder network activity can effectively address food safety issues in traditional markets, empower local stakeholders, and create a sustainable and enabling environment for food safety improvements.



6.4. EATSAFE CASE STUDY: MARKET IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE IN ETHIOPIA

EatSafe's Market Improvement Initiative (MII) in Ethiopia is a collective action effort aimed at enhancing local stakeholders' engagement and coordination around food safety in local markets through the development of a Market Improvement Plan (MIP) for Aroge Gebeya, EatSafe's target market. Led by the Hawassa Mayor's Office with operational support from EatSafe, the MII comprises 25 members, approximately half of whom represent government agencies, with an additional 10 representatives from CSOs, associations, academia, and the hospitality industry. Launched in May 2023, the MII team convened monthly and visited both EatSafe's target and control markets several times. The MII developed a Market Improvement Plan (MIP) to guide their ongoing work and collaboration with the local government.

The MII demonstrated that high stakeholder engagement is critical for success, as local stakeholders provided valuable insights and showed greater commitment to implementing the MIP when involved in its creation. However, coordinating diverse stakeholders is challenging and requires continuous discussion. It is crucial to maintain regular communication and engagement with local stakeholders to sustain motivation and ensure successful MIP implementation. Adequate resources, including time and budget, should be allocated to support MII activities and address emerging challenges.



7. CONCLUSION

Feed the Future's Evidence and Action Towards Safe Nutritious Food (EatSafe) initiative has tested the potential to improve food safety in traditional markets through a multifaceted approach. By focusing on demand-driven behavior change, EatSafe worked to encourage both consumers and vendors to adopt safer food handling practices. The initiative's implementation success in Nigeria and Ethiopia showcases the effectiveness of combining consumer-facing and vendor-facing interventions, rooted in the COM-B model of behavior change, to enhance food safety.

EatSafe's activities, including communication campaigns, vendor training, branding, and the establishment of collective action networks, have been instrumental in fostering a culture of food safety. These interventions have not only increased awareness but also motivated tangible behavior changes among market actors. The initiative's emphasis on creating an enabling environment through stakeholder engagement has been critical in sustaining these changes. Moving forward, the insights and lessons learned from EatSafe's implementation can inform and guide future efforts to improve food safety in traditional markets using demand driven behavior change, ensuring that these essential retail spaces contribute to public health and economic well-being.