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### No. 18: Inclusive Growth and Informal Vending in Maputo's Food Markets

Inês Raimundo

Jeremy Wagner

Jonathan Crush

*Balsillie School of International Affairs/WLU, jcrush@wlu.ca*

Ezequiel Abrahamo

Cameron McCordic

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# INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND INFORMAL VENDING IN MAPUTO'S FOOD MARKETS

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INÊS RAIMUNDO, JEREMY WAGNER,  
JONATHAN CRUSH, EZEQUIEL ABRAHAMO  
AND CAMERON MCCORDIC

SERIES EDITORS: PROF JONATHAN CRUSH  
AND DR LIAM RILEY

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# AUTHORS

**Inês Raimundo**, Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique

**Jeremy Wagner**, Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo

**Jonathan Crush**, Balsillie School of International Affairs

**Ezequiel Abrahamo**, Eduardo Mondlane University

**Cameron McCordic**, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

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- No 2** *The Urban Food System of Maputo, Mozambique*
- No 3** *The Urban Food System of Cape Town, South Africa*
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# PREFACE

A major component of urban informality in the Global South is the food retail, distribution, and preparation sector. In most cities, including Maputo, the informal food economy comprises a dense and diverse network of informal markets, suppliers, transporters, mobile traders, hawkers, retailers, and street food vendors making food more accessible and affordable in low-income areas. The informal food sector is thus critical to the food security of poor urban households in rapidly growing towns and cities in the Global South. While the vibrancy of the sector is everywhere apparent, research devoted to understanding the structure, organization, dynamics, and impacts of informal food systems under conditions of hyper-urbanization has been limited. By working in an interdisciplinary context with mixed methodologies and across different cities, the Hungry Cities Partnership (HCP) aims to add considerably to our understanding of common elements and differences across the Global South.

The informal food sector also represents an “urban laboratory” for examining whether and how inclusive growth strategies can positively affect entrepreneurship, incomes, alleviation of poverty, and food security. Fast-growing cities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean are characterized by expanding degrees of informality. The definition of informality and the informal economy has been a source of debate since the 1970s. Broadly understood, informality has become the defining feature of the landscape, politics, and economy of the contemporary city in the South. As a result, efforts to secure livelihoods depend heavily on informalized activity. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has noted that “it would be misleading to address food security without taking into account a large part of the economy that provides jobs, incomes and essential services for the urban population. Despite its important role, the informal economy is still poorly defined, poorly measured and consequently poorly taken into account in food security policies” (Hitimana et al 2011: 1).

The literature on informal sector activity generally takes one of two positions. The first is a survivalist position, which suggests that unemployed individuals are pushed into the sector because they are desperate to provide for themselves and their dependants (Berner et al 2012). The corollary is that they will leave the sector as soon as formal employment opportunities are available. A second, opportunistic, position is that informal sector vendors are motivated more by choice than necessity and see opportunities for economic and social advancement in the sector (Knox et al 2019, Margolis 2014, Williams and Gurtoo 2012). An inclusive-growth perspective asks how opportunists can maximize their outcomes and how survivalists can be supported to become more opportunistic. As



such, this perspective requires a focus on the enterprise rather than the individual and on entrepreneurship, innovation, and job creation. Studies of the informal sector suggest that the opportunities and obstacles to successful informal entrepreneurship vary considerably by enterprise size, type, and location, as well as the vendor's gender, migrant status, ethnicity, caste, and access to microfinance, markets, and support programs.

National, regional, and municipal policies towards informality and informal entrepreneurship are highly variable (Young and Crush 2019). Policies towards the informal food economy span the spectrum from non-interventionism to draconian attempts to control and even eliminate informality. The pathologizing and criminalization of the informal food sector is especially common at municipal level. Regulation through various legal and policy instruments is also a pervasive response to informality. If the informal food sector is to grow and thrive, and to provide opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship, then an enabling policy environment is essential. The survey results presented and discussed in this report add significantly to the evidence base on which supportive and workable policies can be constructed.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report builds on, and should be read in conjunction with related work on informality in the Mozambican capital by the Southern African Migration Program (SAMP) (Chikanda and Raimundo 2017, Crush et al 2015, Peberdy 2000), the African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN) (Raimundo et al 2013), and the Hungry Cities Partnership (HCP). The HCP has produced two reports that provide essential context. HCP Report No. 2, The Urban Food System of Maputo, Mozambique (Chikanda et al 2016), provides a comprehensive overview of current knowledge about the nature and operation of Maputo's food system. It demonstrates the importance of the informal sector and city markets as a source of affordable food and employment and self-employment. HCP Report No. 10, The State of Household Food Security in Maputo (Raimundo et al 2018), presents the results of a city-wide household food security survey and provides convincing evidence of the widespread reliance of lower-income households on the informal food sector for income and as the major source of food consumed in the household. The centrality of the informal food sector in making food accessible to poor urban households and providing employment for young people has been reinforced in other recent publications (Crush and McCordic 2017, Raimundo and McCordic 2019, Sousa et al 2019). Policy responses to informality, and particularly the challenges of formalizing the informal, have also received attention (Aga et al 2019, Rogerson 2017, Sawaya and Bhero 2018).

Against this backdrop, the report examines the informal food sector in Maputo through an analysis of data from a large-scale 2017 survey of food vendors operating primarily in the city's food markets. Section Two provides an overview of the sampling strategies and methodologies of the survey. Section Three profiles the surveyed food vendors included in the sample, including their demographic characteristics, education levels, and motivations for working as food vendors. Section Four discusses the food vendor micro-enterprise structure. Section Five explores the business strategies employed by food vendors, including their location strategies, price setting, and responses to price fluctuations. Section Six examines business challenges that the vendors experience within Maputo, while Section Seven explores employee characteristics. Section Eight examines food sanitation and vendors' storage practices. The final section provides a summary of the survey findings and associated policy implications.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The data included in this report is from a survey of 1,022 small-scale food vendors in Maputo completed in 2017. The survey was administered to food vendors with five or fewer employees in and around seven markets in the City of Maputo (Figure 1). The sample size was stratified proportionately across the markets based on market size (as estimated by local experts on the Maputo food system at Eduardo Mondlane University). Within each food market, enumerators followed a systematic sampling strategy to select vendors for the survey. The HCP survey instrument was used to collect detailed information on the demographics and structure of the businesses as well as the challenges they face and strategies used to overcome them. The survey also collected information on the demographics of the employees of the food vending businesses. No individuals under the age of 18 were included in the survey. The distribution of sampled vendors between the seven markets is shown in Table 1. Three-quarters of vendors interviewed had permanent stalls in one of the markets and the rest were operating near markets as mobile vendors or in stalls on the roadside (Table 2).

**TABLE 1: Sampled Food Vendor Distribution by Market in Maputo**

	No.	%
Zimpeto	400	39.1
Xiquelene	229	22.4
Xipamanine	158	15.5
Malanga	101	9.9
Museu	50	4.9
Estrela Vermelha	47	4.6
Mandela	37	3.6

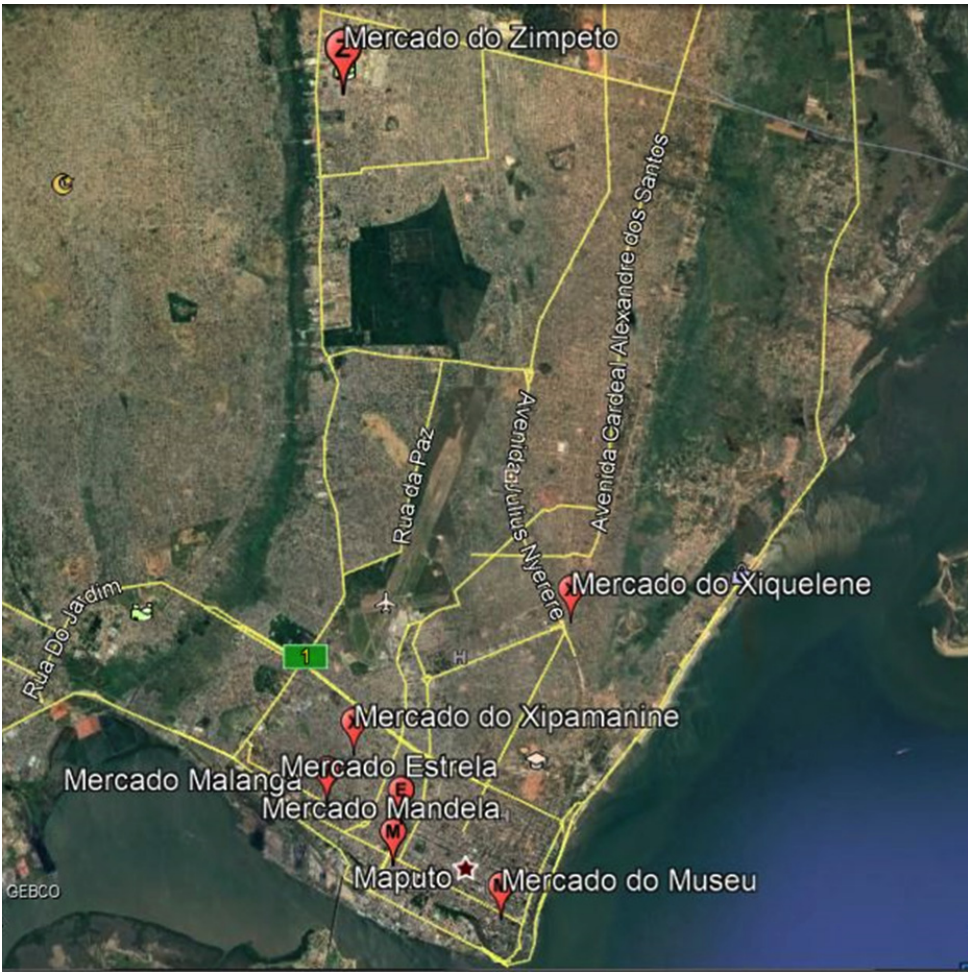
**TABLE 2: Location of Activities**

	No.	%
Permanent stall in a market	757	74.7
Permanent stall on the street	127	12.5
No fixed location, mobile	122	12.0
Temporary stall on the street	18	1.8
Other*	18	1.8
<i>*Includes bus terminal, home, taxi rank, and workshop</i>		

Given the absence of an area or list frame of food vendors in the city, the representivity of the sample cannot be guaranteed. In addition, because of the focus on markets and their environs, certain types of vendor were not captured in the survey: for example, vendors outside schools, on city streets, and from backyard

stalls in residential areas (Gelormini et al 2015). However, the demographic profile of the sample is not dissimilar to the profile of the 935 household members who worked as vendors in the HCP city-wide household survey (Raimundo et al 2018). They had an average age of 38.9 with a standard deviation of 12.9 and a gender breakdown of 27% male and 73% female. In this survey of 1,022 food vendors, the average age was 37.0 with a standard deviation of 11.9 and a gender breakdown of 24% male and 76% female.

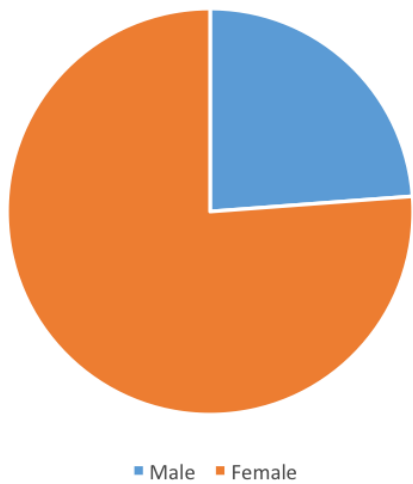
**FIGURE 1: Surveyed Maputo Food Markets**



### 3. MARKET VENDOR PROFILE

Informal vending in the city’s food markets is heavily gendered, with 76% of respondents identifying as women and only 24% as men (Figure 2). The average age of the food vendors was 38 years. However, there is a broad age range with 45% of respondents considered youth (under the age of 35), and 11% over the age of 55 (Figure 3). Among the young vendors, 64% identified as women and 36% as men (McCordic and Raimundo 2019: 3). This suggests that more young men are involved in food vending than in the past; a trend first commented on by Agadjanian (2002). Food vending tends to be done by those with limited formal education. Only 19% of the vendors had completed primary school and 7% had completed high school. Just 1% had some tertiary education while 10% had no formal education at all. The rest had some primary (34%) or some secondary (29%) education (Figure 4).

**FIGURE 2: Sex of Market Vendors**



**FIGURE 3: Age of Market Vendors**

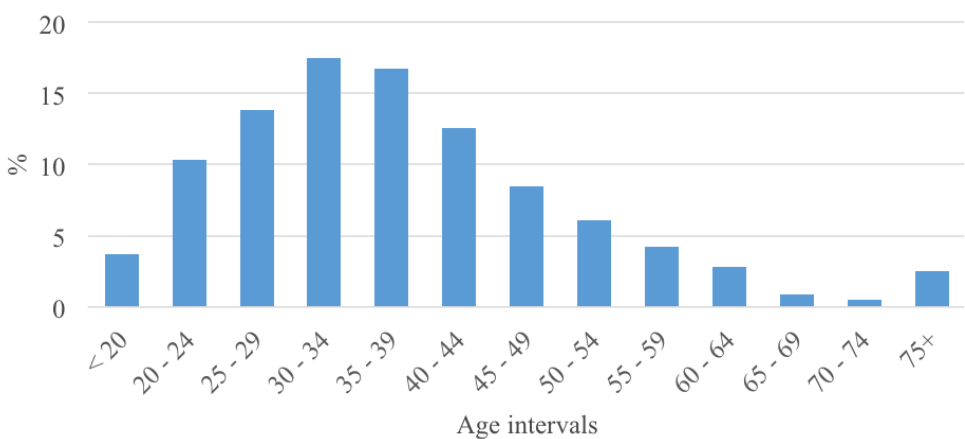
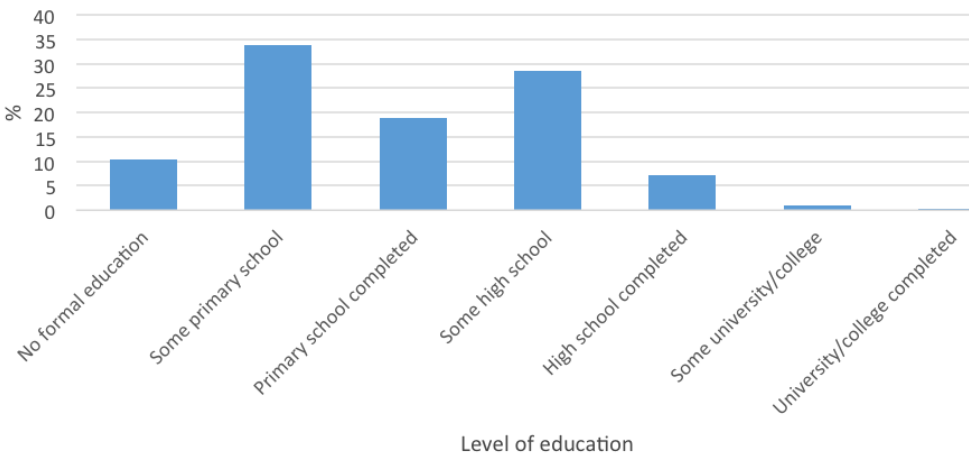


FIGURE 4: Market Vendor Highest Level of Education



Maputo has grown rapidly in recent decades and many of its inhabitants are rural-urban migrants (Chikanda and Raimundo 2016). Among the food vendors sampled, 58% were born outside the city (Table 3). However, only 34% were born in rural areas, while 24% were born in another city in Mozambique. While this suggests that more food vendors in Maputo are likely to have migrated from rural areas than urban areas in the country, it is still significant that almost one-quarter of those interviewed were inter-urban migrants. This may be a legacy of the 1977–1992 civil war when there was large-scale displacement of rural populations, with people seeking refuge either in the cities or in other countries. While the migration and food security literature pays much attention to rural-urban linkages, it is important to be aware of the significance of urban-urban migration in Mozambique. In the informal food sector, Maputo with its large consumer market may be a drawcard for vendors from smaller urban centres.

TABLE 3: Place of Birth of Food Vendors

	No.	%
Maputo	425	42.1
A rural area in Mozambique	341	33.7
Another city in Mozambique	238	23.5
Another country	7	0.7
Total	1,011	100

Nearly 30% of the vendors had been working in another capacity in the informal sector, as employees (10%) or business operators (20%), before starting their food business. This suggests that options to work more formally are few. As many as 26% had been in domestic service, which is itself a low-paying and often precarious form of informal employment. Another 5% had been working as unskilled manual labourers, again largely informally. The proportion who had moved from formal to informal sector employment was small, at around 14%.

Another 10% had gone straight from school into the informal food business. Few had an occupation other than their food vending business. A small number were also domestic workers (around 4%), operated other informal businesses (3%), had other informal sector jobs, or were students (both 2%).

**TABLE 4: Previous Occupation of Food Vendors**

	No.	%
<b>Informal work</b>		
Domestic worker	139	25.6
Operated own informal sector business (doing different activity)	78	14.3
Employed in informal sector	52	9.6
Operated own informal sector business (doing same activity)	29	5.3
Unskilled manual worker	26	4.8
<b>Formal work</b>		
Agricultural worker	20	3.7
Hotel/restaurant worker	16	2.9
Employer/manager	11	2.0
Skilled manual worker	8	1.5
Office worker	8	1.5
Police/military/security	7	1.3
Businessman/woman formal sector	3	0.6
Mine worker	2	0.4
Professional	1	0.2
Teacher	1	0.2
<b>Other</b>		
Scholar/student	52	9.6
Other	91	16.7

## 4. STARTING AN INFORMAL MARKET VENDING ENTERPRISE

Asking food vendors what prompted them to get involved in the informal food sector provides initial insights into whether their motivations were primarily survivalist or opportunistic. The vendors were given a list of 24 possible reasons and asked to rank each on a 5-point scale (no importance, little importance, moderate importance, very important, or extremely important). A mean score out of 5 was calculated for the entire sample, for the male vendors only, and for the female vendors only (Table 5). For the analysis, the factors were grouped into three broad categories: economic survivalist factors, entrepreneurial orientation, and building social capital. Economic survivalist factors ranked more highly on



average than entrepreneurial orientation or building social capital. However, only three of the survivalist factors had a score above 3.0 compared with six of the entrepreneurial factors. Easily the most common economic motivator for starting a food vending business was the need to earn money to survive (the only factor with a score over 4.0). Wanting to give their family greater financial security (3.7) and being unemployed and unable to find a job (3.3) were also relatively important. Moving out of an unsatisfactory formal sector job was of little importance; consistent with the finding that very few vendors had such jobs prior to start-up. Wanting to remit to family members in other parts of the country and providing jobs for family members were relatively unimportant. On all economic survivalist indicators, the mean score differences between male and female vendors were relatively insignificant.

While most are clearly in the food vending business for economic survival, this does not mean they are there out of desperation. Indeed, the mean scores on the entrepreneurship scales indicate a strong entrepreneurial orientation. Wanting to run their own business (at 3.6) ranked third overall. The vendors also wanted more control over their own time and to be their own boss (3.4). Many felt they had the right personality for food vending and saw it as an opportunity to learn skills and do something new. They also relished the challenge of starting their own business. Although male vendors scored marginally higher than female vendors on most of these indicators, the differences were very small. More altruistic motivations around building and utilizing social capital did not rate very highly among either male or female vendors.

TABLE 5: Factors Influencing Decision to Start Food Vending Business

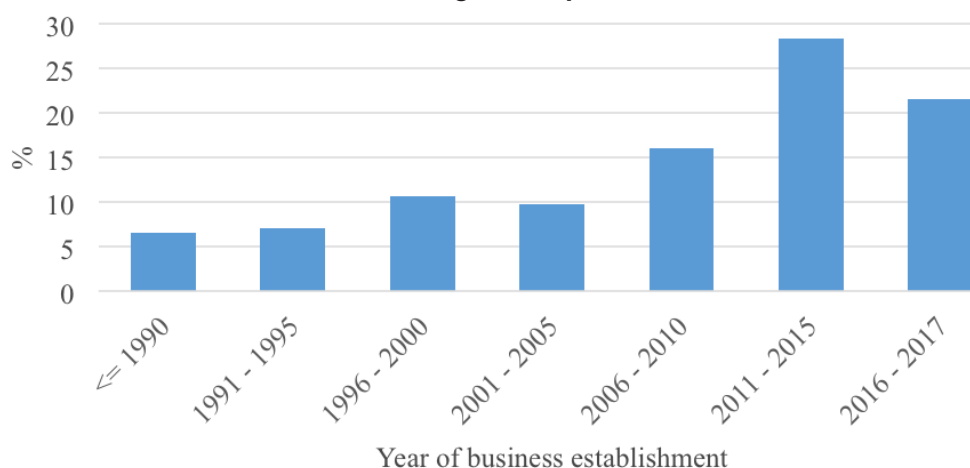
	Total	Male	Female
Economic survivalist factors	Max = 5	Max = 5	Max = 5
I needed more money just to survive	4.2	4.1	4.2
I wanted to give my family greater financial security	3.7	3.7	3.7
I was unemployed and unable to find a job	3.3	3.2	3.3
I wanted to make more money to send to my family in home area	2.5	2.7	2.4
I wanted to provide employment for members of my family	2.1	2.2	2.0
I had a job but it did not pay enough	1.8	1.9	1.8
I had a job but it did not suit my qualifications and experience	1.4	1.5	1.4
Entrepreneurial orientation			
I have always wanted to run my own business	3.6	3.7	3.6
I have the right personality to run my own business	3.4	3.6	3.4
I wanted more control over my own time/be my own boss	3.3	3.4	3.2
I like to learn new skills	3.2	3.5	3.1
I wanted to do something new and challenging	3.1	3.3	3.1
I like to challenge myself	3.1	3.4	3.0



I enjoy taking risks	2.9	3.1	2.9
I wanted to compete with others and be the best	1.9	1.9	1.9
<b>Building social capital</b>			
I wanted to contribute to the development of this country	2.8	3.1	2.8
I wanted to increase my status in the community	2.2	2.3	2.2
My family has always been involved in business	2.2	2.3	2.2
Support/help in starting business was available from other people	1.9	1.9	1.9
I wanted to provide a service/product to consumers in my neighbourhood	1.9	2.0	1.8
I wanted to provide employment for people from my home area	1.7	1.9	1.6
I decided to go into business in partnership with others	1.7	1.8	1.6
I wanted to provide a service/product to consumers in other parts of Maputo	1.7	1.9	1.7
I wanted to provide employment for other people	1.6	1.9	1.6

The expansion of the informal food sector in Maputo is illustrated by the timeline of business start-up (Figure 5). While a few respondents had been working in the sector for over three decades, the last decade has seen major growth with half of the enterprises established in that time. However, because only currently-operating vendors were interviewed, it is possible that the rate of business creation was higher in earlier years but that these vendors are no longer in operation.

**FIGURE 5: Timeline of Food Vending Start-up**



Almost all started their business themselves or purchased it from other vendors. The barriers to entry are relatively low and the average amount of start-up capital was MZN3,756 (USD62 in July 2017) (Figure 6). Many vendors started out with less than MZN500, although some had larger amounts to invest. The highest recorded amount was still only MZN130,000 (USD2,150). When analyzing differences in start-up by gender, men seem to have access to more money than

women: 37% of men invested more than MZN2,500 (USD41) compared with only 21% of women. Similarly, 54% of women invested MZN500 (USD8) or less compared to 36% of men. Sources of start-up funding were similar for both groups. In total, 70% of the respondents financed the start-up of their business with personal savings while 14% deployed gifts from relatives (Table 6). Only 1% of the vendors had obtained a bank loan, and none had received financial support from government agencies or NGOs. To get started in the informal food sector then, most of the vendors needed to be self-financing with little or no support from formal financial institutions, government or non-governmental organizations (Osano and Languitone 2016).

FIGURE 6: Amount of Start-up Capital

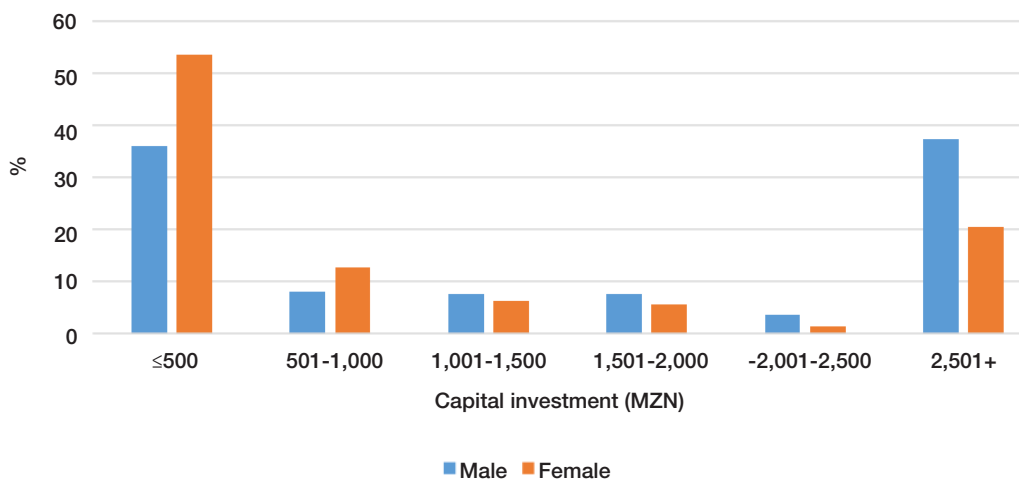


TABLE 6: Sources of Start-up Capital

	No.	%
Personal savings of money earned by the respondent	658	69.7
Gift from relatives	127	13.5
Loan from non-relatives	63	6.7
Loan from relatives in this country	30	3.2
Business credit (goods on terms)	20	2.1
Loan from a bank	13	1.4
Usurers (money lenders)	5	0.5
Money from relatives in another country	5	0.5
Loan from informal financial institution	3	0.3
Loan from micro-finance institution	1	0.1
Loan from religious institution	0	0.0
Loan from government agency	0	0.0
Loan from NGO	0	0.0
Other	43	4.6

Food Vending in Central and Zimpeto Markets















## 5. INFORMAL FOOD VENDING ACTIVITIES

### 5.1 Types of Produce Sold

In and around the markets of Maputo, vegetables are the most common form of fresh produce (Table 7). A wide variety of vegetables are available for purchase but onions (21% of the sample in the month prior to the survey), tomatoes (18%), and garlic (13%) are the most common food items sold. Legumes are also common with 12% of vendors selling butter beans and 11% selling peanuts. Cereals and meat of various kinds are also available but not as common with less than 10% of the sample selling any one item. Other products such as cooking oil (10%), salt (7%), sugar (7%), and seasoning (4%) are also sold. Notable omissions include most fruits (with the exception of coconuts) and beef. Thirteen of the 30 items listed in Table 7 are most often procured from wholesalers. Wholesalers operate at some of the markets (particularly Zimpeto, Malanga, and Xipamanine) as well as other areas of the city. Known as *magwevas*, these operators buy in bulk from various sources and sell to vendors in the markets in smaller quantities. These wholesalers include Chinese suppliers.

In Table 7, formal markets are listed as another important source. This column refers to purchasing from wholesalers at those markets classified as formal by the city, including Xipamanine, Malanga, Zimpeto, and the Municipal Central Market.

Purchasing directly from factories or supermarkets is extremely rare. A few items are primarily procured from small formal retail shops, including goat's meat (50%), rice (42%), seasoning (39%), sugar (34%), and maize flour (32%). Three items (pumpkin leaves, lettuce, and a variety of cabbage) come directly from farms. The column labelled "informal sector producers/retailers" refers primarily to informal traders including those who cross into South Africa (Piscitelli 2018, Raimundo and Chikanda 2016). Many products on the list are purchased from this source by a significant minority of vendors (up to 30%). The other finding of significance is that there are virtually no sales of food that is self-produced (by, for example, urban agriculture) in the markets.

**TABLE 7: Sources of Food Items Sold by Vendors**

	Vendors selling the item %	Directly from factory %	From wholesaler %	From supermarkets %	From small shops/retailers %	From formal markets %	Directly from farms %	Informal sector producers/retailers %	Other %	Self-produced %
<b>Vegetables</b>										
Onions	20.5	0.0	45.6	3.4	6.8	21.4	1.0	19.9	8.7	0.5
Tomatoes	17.9	0.0	48.3	1.7	5.6	19.4	0.0	23.3	3.9	0.0
Garlic	13.1	0.0	36.4	4.5	10.6	26.5	1.5	18.9	9.8	0.0
Butter beans	12.1	0.0	36.4	1.7	25.6	17.4	2.5	14.0	5.0	0.0
Peanuts	11.4	0.0	33.3	1.8	29.8	22.8	1.8	14.0	5.3	0.0
Irish potatoes	11.3	0.0	47.8	2.7	8.8	16.8	2.7	16.8	10.6	0.0
Sweet potatoes	9.0	0.0	44.4	0.0	22.2	22.2	11.1	11.1	0.0	0.0
Cabbage (rebolho)	9.7	1.0	45.4	2.1	7.2	12.4	8.2	21.6	5.2	0.0
Carrots	9.2	0.0	44.6	3.3	4.3	23.9	1.1	18.5	7.6	0.0
Pumpkin leaves	8.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
Cucumbers	7.1	0.0	39.4	7.0	2.8	18.3	1.4	28.2	5.6	0.0
Lettuce	6.4	0.0	17.2	0.0	1.6	3.1	59.4	12.5	3.1	1.6
Cabbage (couve)	5.2	1.9	21.2	0.0	0.0	5.8	59.6	3.8	3.8	1.9
<b>Cereals</b>										
Maize flour	6.8	0.0	32.4	0.0	32.4	25.0	0.0	7.4	8.8	0.0
Rice	3.6	0.0	25.0	5.6	41.7	22.2	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0
Bread	2.5	32.0	12.0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	28.0	24.0	0.0
Cassava	2.2	0.0	45.5	4.5	0.0	4.5	9.1	18.2	18.2	0.0
<b>Meat</b>										
Stock	8.5	1.2	21.2	4.7	23.5	37.6	0.0	5.9	7.1	0.0
Pork	5.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	20.0	40.0	0.0
Fish	2.2	0.0	27.3	4.5	18.2	9.1	0.0	22.7	22.7	0.0
Goat's meat	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Chicken	2.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	15.0	15.0	0.0	25.0	40.0	0.0
Lamb	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0
<b>Other</b>										
Cooking oil	10.0	2.0	28.0	2.0	25.0	29.0	0.0	7.0	10.0	0.0
Salt	6.7	6.0	13.4	3.0	20.9	28.4	0.0	16.4	16.4	0.0
Sugar	6.5	0.0	26.2	1.5	33.8	35.4	0.0	6.2	4.6	0.0
Eggs	5.4	0.0	25.9	5.6	22.2	31.5	0.0	11.1	13.0	0.0
Seasoning	4.2	0.0	19.5	0.0	39.0	19.5	0.0	12.2	14.6	2.4
Coconuts	2.3	0.0	26.1	4.3	4.3	17.4	0.0	39.1	8.7	0.0
Peru (turkey)	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0



## 5.2 Business Expenditures

The most common business expenditure is the cost of purchasing food to resell (Table 8). Nearly two-thirds of the 913 vendors who answered the question had spent money on food to sell at their business in the previous month, with the average amount spent being MZN17,179 (USD284). The 30% who had not incurred expenses buying food either had sufficient stocks or obtained their produce primarily from farms near the city. Business taxes and the costs of licences and permits were paid by 25% of the vendors. Only a small number had incurred expenses in connection with utilities, rental fees, telecommunications, and employment costs (all less than 10%).

**TABLE 8: Business Expenditures in Previous Month**

	No.	%	Mean (MZN)	Mean (USD)
Cost of food sold at this business	649	71.3	17,179	284.17
Business taxes, licences, and permits	254	27.8	820	13.56
Utilities (water, electricity, heating)	73	8.0	931	15.40
Rental fees (for the land, building, cart used in this business)	47	5.1	1,128	18.66
Telecommunications (internet, mobile phone)	31	3.4	658	10.88
Employment costs and expenses (salaries, wages, benefits)	30	3.3	7,978	131.97
Financial services	17	1.9	1,237	20.46
Subcontracts (services of other businesses)	3	0.3	800	13.23
Other expenses	268	29.3	2,066	34.17
<i>Note: Multiple-response question</i>				

Another question focused on expenditures related to business premises (though not confined to the previous month) (Table 9). As many as 41% said they were owners or part-owners of their stalls (for which they would have paid the municipality or bought from a previous owner). Most part-owners share their stalls with relatives. A total of 29% of the vendors said they paid rent to the municipality; similar to the 25% who had paid for permits in the previous month. There was a discrepancy between the 5% who had paid rental fees in the previous month and the fact that only 1% said they had paid rent to a private owner. However, the former may include some vendors who paid to share space with others. As many as 41% said they were owners or part-owners of their operating space, while 23% operated rent-free, either with or without permission.

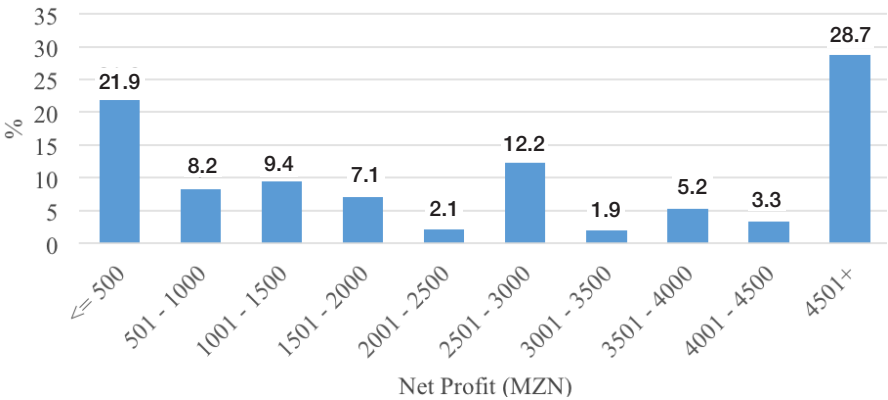
TABLE 9: Ownership and Tenure of Business Premises

	No.	%
I own it/am part owner	411	41.2
Pay rent to council/municipality	286	28.6
Rent-free, with permission	130	13.0
Rent-free, without permission	93	9.3
Share space/premises with others	42	4.2
Pay rent to private owner	9	0.9
Other	28	2.8
Total	999	100

5.3 Income and Profitability

The average net profit made by the food vendors in the previous month was MZN4,484 (USD74), although less than half were willing to disclose this information. This figure is more than the 2017 minimum wage in some formal employment sectors (such as agriculture, fishing, and baking) but less than in others such as manufacturing, mining, and utilities. It is similar, however, to wages earned in construction (MZN4,886.74) and SMME employment (MZN4,907.17).<sup>1</sup> Figure 7 shows considerable range in profitability. Only one-third of the vendors reported profits of over MZN4,000, while another 30% reported profits of less than MZN1,000. Some 22% had profits of less than MZN500 (USD8) in the month prior to the survey. These amounts are far lower than those earned by participants in informal cross-border trade with South Africa (Raimundo and Chikanda 2016). This indicates that significant numbers of food vendors may be making far less income than other vendors within the city. Interestingly, it is also significantly lower than the average MZN9,668 (USD290) reported by households as monthly income from informal sector employment (Raimundo et al 2018: 9). This suggests that net profit is calculated after transfers of income to support the vendor’s household have been made.

FIGURE 7: Net Profits in Previous Month



1 <https://wageindicator.org/salary/minimum-wage/mozambique/archive/minimum-wages-in-mozambique-with-effect-from-01-04-2016-to-31-03-2017>

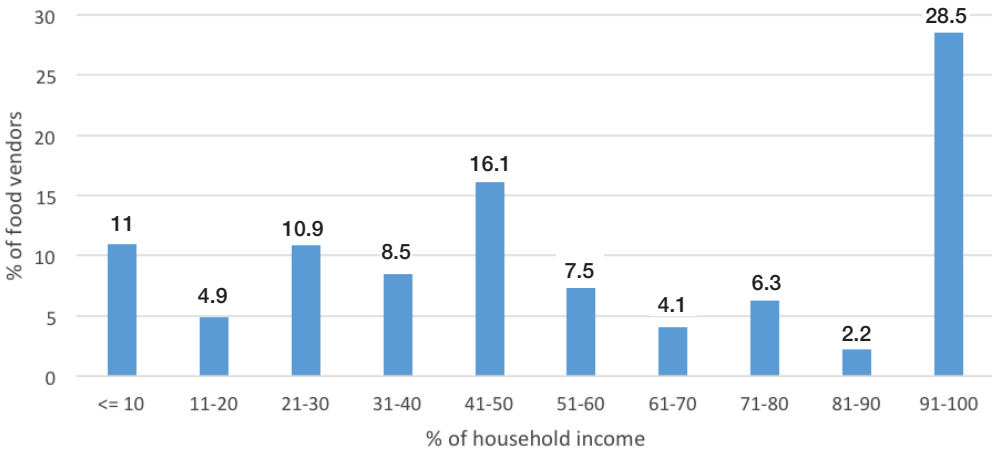
The average number of dependants that food vendors support from their business income is 5.5. On average, income from their food vending business contributed to 59% of total household income. Nearly 30% of the food vendors rely on the income from their business for almost all (90-100%) household income while only 11% of vendors contribute 10% or less of their total household income (Figure 8). Thus, a significant proportion of food vendors in Maputo rely on their food vending business to support themselves and their dependants. While this is consistent with the major reasons for becoming involved in food vending, it inevitably means that the business has less profit to invest in expansion.

Most vendors feed themselves and people other than their customers from their stock. As Table 10 shows, 84% said their family eats food products from their business and 78% that they eat some of the food themselves. Exactly one-quarter also share food with their neighbours and 23% share with other people. Data on what is shared and how often was not collected but it is clear that not all the food they purchase yields income through sales. While this may be the case with much of the food, it does demonstrate that the business is supporting the household and others; improving their food security.

**TABLE 10: People Other Than Customers Who Consume Food From Vending Business**

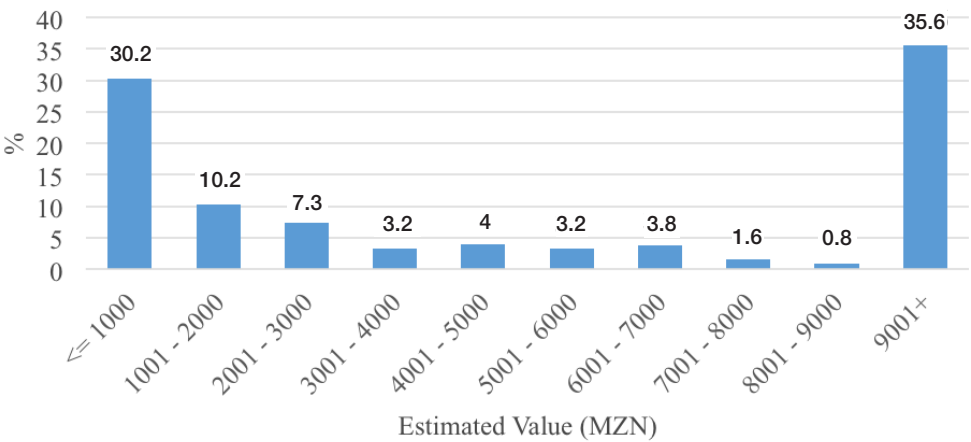
	No.	%
My family	848	83.9
Myself	792	78.3
My neighbours	254	25.1
Other people	231	22.8
The food is only consumed by my customers	45	4.5
My employees	16	1.6

**FIGURE 8: Proportion of Household Income Made Up by Food Vending**



The average estimated worth of the food vending businesses surveyed was MZN72,573 (USD1,200). However, this figure is boosted by the fact that a small number of vendors gave relatively high self-evaluations. As Figure 9 shows, only 36% of the vendors valued their operations at over MZN9,000, while 30% estimated their net worth at MZN1,000 or less. What this confirms is that income is siphoned off to support household members, which means that business growth is hampered.

**FIGURE 9: Estimated Net Worth of Business**



## 6. MARKET VENDOR OPERATING STRATEGIES

The most common locational strategy identified by the food vendors was to sell in a place with the greatest number of customers (mentioned by 62%) (Table 11). Since most vendors in the survey were in or near the city’s markets, this suggests that the markets provide access to the most customers in the estimation of the vendors. Just over 30%, however, noted that proximity to home was an important consideration when choosing a location. Since markets in Maputo are not as ubiquitous as in some other cities, this suggests that a significant minority of vendors are drawn from the markets’ surrounding neighbourhoods. Proximity to public transport and passing traffic were not as important as in other cities in the HCP network; again because the sample primarily consists of market rather than street vendors. Most vendors (94%) own only one food vending business, and just 2% said they sold food at more than one location.

**TABLE 11: Reasons for Current Location**

	No.	%
Place with greatest number of customers	628	62.1
Close to home	313	30.9
Always done business there	264	26.1
Close to public transport	135	13.3
Due to passing traffic	110	10.9
Safer than other locations	88	8.7
Close to other enterprises	86	8.5
Have a permit to operate there	34	3.4
Own/rent the land	29	2.9
Cheap land	25	2.5
Rents are cheaper	21	2.1
Distant from other competitors	21	2.1
Access to services such as water/electricity	18	1.8
Few or no bylaw officers	15	1.5

The food pricing strategies of vendors show that competition with others is pursued by only 14% (Table 12). In an environment where so many vendors work near each other it makes business sense not to undercut one another. Undercutting antagonizes other vendors and so vendors instead prefer to negotiate prices with their customers (nearly 50%) and give discounts for customer loyalty (32%). Just over two-thirds of respondents said they attract regular customers and, of these, 60% stock food items based on the demands of these customers. As many as 46% claimed that if they relocated, their regular customers would continue to patronize them.

**TABLE 12: Price Setting Strategies of Food Vendors**

	No.	%
Negotiate with customers	483	47.3
Give discounts to regular customers	326	31.9
Keep prices cheaper than competitors	141	13.8
Add a standard markup to the cost of the food	111	11.0
Offer prices based on the apparent wealth of customers	29	1.5
<i>Note: Multiple-response question</i>		

Various other business strategies are deployed by the vendors (Table 13). The most common are extended hours of operation (by 39% of vendors) and offering credit (32%). This is exactly the same proportion as those who give discounts to regular customers, which implies that credit is extended to consumers who can be relied on to pay their debts. Around one-quarter of the vendors open their business only during periods of the day when most customers are around (usually early). Most striking is that only 3% of the vendors keep business records. Regarding strategies associated with food item procurement, just

over 20% negotiate prices with their suppliers, while only 16% purchase stock in bulk and 4% do this by combining with other vendors. Use of information technology (mobile phones) for business purposes is minimal, although some vendors take orders and receive payment by phone. The lack of mobile coordination and shopping for the cheapest suppliers shows that food vendors within the city have few options and resources available to them when procuring food for their business. Various strategies to avoid security and other risks are hardly used; an indication that, unlike in South African cities, crime is not a particular problem facing Maputo's vendors. Nearly three-quarters of the vendors reported that they had seen recent changes in the prices of the food they sell. They respond by raising their own prices (60%) or changing the amount of food they stock (50%).

**TABLE 13: Operating Strategies Used by Vendors**

	No.	%
<b>Operating strategies</b>		
Extend my hours of operation	390	38.6
Offer credit for customers	325	32.2
Open business only during periods of the day with most customers	245	24.3
Keep records of my business accounts	32	3.2
Change what is sold at different times of the year	9	0.9
<b>Procurement strategies</b>		
Negotiate prices with suppliers	233	23.1
Purchase stock in bulk	161	15.9
Look for cheapest prices for goods by calling suppliers	120	11.9
Look for the cheapest prices for goods by asking other vendors	106	10.5
Purchase stock in bulk together with others	43	4.3
Look for the cheapest prices for goods by consulting the media	26	2.6
<b>Use of IT</b>		
Use mobile phones to take orders from customers	118	11.7
Use mobile phones to receive payments from customers	85	8.4
Use mobile phones to coordinate with suppliers/other vendors	54	5.3
<b>Risk-avoidance strategies</b>		
Pay for security guards	50	5.0
Engage in shareholding	22	2.2
Partner with other businesses to distribute risks	13	1.3
Pay the police for protection	11	1.1
Sleep on business premises	2	0.2
Purchase insurance	1	0.1
Keep weapons for self-protection	1	0.1
<b>Responses to food price increases</b>		
Change the price of the food sold	354	60.2
Change the amount of food stocked	292	49.7
Changed the type of food sold	57	9.7
<i>Note: Multiple-response question</i>		

## 7. MARKET VENDOR OPERATING CHALLENGES

The challenges and problems confronting Maputo's informal food vendors in and around city markets, and the frequency with which each is experienced are listed in Table 14. Competition with other vendors is easily the most important challenge with 43% experiencing this often and 38% sometimes. Related challenges – two few customers and insufficient sales – were often experienced by a much smaller proportion (18% and 16% respectively) but were sometimes an issue for many (74% and 72% respectively). Given the supermarket revolution in Southern African cities (Nickanor et al 2017), and its impact on the informal food sector, it is of interest that in Maputo only 14% of the vendors saw competition as a problem (with 18% saying it was sometimes an issue). In terms of operational challenges, around 80% said suppliers often or sometimes charge too much and just over half that they experience problems with customers not paying their debts. This is always the risk when offering low-income households food on credit. So, although vendors tend to offer the service primarily to regular customers, it does not eliminate the problem of debt repayment.

Most other problems on the list were only experienced by a minority of vendors but that, in itself, is noteworthy. A common donor “solution” to making informal entrepreneurs more effective is to improve their access to credit and build their skills through training programs. The assumption here is that informal-sector enterprises are cash-deprived and that vendors lack the skills needed to succeed. Hence, it is of interest that in this survey, only 8% said that lack of access to credit was often a problem and only 9% felt they lacked the skills they needed. Slightly more respondents sometimes found both a problem, but in both cases around 70% said they were never a problem. The other conclusion from infrequent experience relates to security issues where vendors seem able to operate in relative safety with limited experience of crime/theft and harassment by the authorities. The latter is not true for all vendors in the city, particularly street vendors (Kamete and Lindell 2010, Rogerson 2017) but it does appear that markets are spaces in which food vendors can operate in relative freedom and safety.

Consistent with the fact that lack of credit was not seen as a major issue, only 8% of food vendors had applied for a bank loan for their business and most were successful. At the same time, two-thirds of the vendors did not think that banks were reluctant to make loans to informal businesses.

**TABLE 14: Problems Experienced by Food Vendors in Previous Year**

	Often %	Sometimes %	Never %
<b>Competition</b>			
Too many competitors around here	43.2	38.1	18.7
Too few customers	17.9	73.9	8.2
Insufficient sales	16.1	71.5	12.4
Competition from supermarkets/large stores	14.0	17.8	68.2
Conflict with vendors from Mozambique	1.6	8.9	89.5
Conflict with vendors from other countries	0.3	4.0	95.7
<b>Operational</b>			
Suppliers charge too much	11.5	69.8	18.8
Customers don't pay their debts	8.4	44.5	47.2
Restricted by lack of relevant training in business skills	9.0	19.9	71.2
Lack of access to credit	7.5	21.6	70.9
No refrigeration	6.1	3.3	90.6
Storage problems	3.8	14.3	81.8
<b>Security threats</b>			
Crime/theft of goods/stock	3.2	32.5	64.3
Verbal insults against your business	3.1	20.4	76.5
Confiscation of goods by police	2.8	11.1	86.1
Harassment/demands for bribes by police	1.5	6.8	91.7
Crime/theft of money/income	1.2	17.7	81.1
Physical attacks/assaults by police	0.5	2.8	96.7
Arrest/detention of yourself/employees	0.4	0.9	98.7
Prejudice against my gender	0.4	3.4	96.2
Prejudice against my nationality	0.3	2.2	97.5
Physical attacks/assaults by citizens of this country	0.1	2.1	97.8

## 8. EMPLOYMENT CREATION

Most vendors in Maputo's markets are single-person operations. Only 5% reported having staff. Of these, 60% employed only one person while 36% employed two. One-third of the employees were family members. This picture is a little different from that of informal cross-border traders operating between Maputo and South Africa. Around half of the traders provide employment for others with an average of 2.1 employees each. Fifteen percent of the traders had three or more employees. Many cross-border traders "prefer to focus on their cross-border activities and employ others to sell the goods on their behalf in Maputo" (Raimundo and Chikanda 2016: 27). Maputo's food market vendors therefore appear to have limited job creation potential, unlike the informal food sector in other cities.



## 9. ASPIRATIONS

If food vendors are in the sector simply to survive, we would expect their aspirations to relate primarily to leaving the sector as soon as possible. However, over half of those interviewed (55%) said that they intend to expand their business operations and own several businesses over the following three years (Table 15). Only 19% said they intended to be in formal employment instead. Given the emphasis in Mozambique on formalizing the informal, it is noteworthy that only 19% of the vendors intended to formalize their operations. Very few intended to retire or migrate back to their home area or another country.

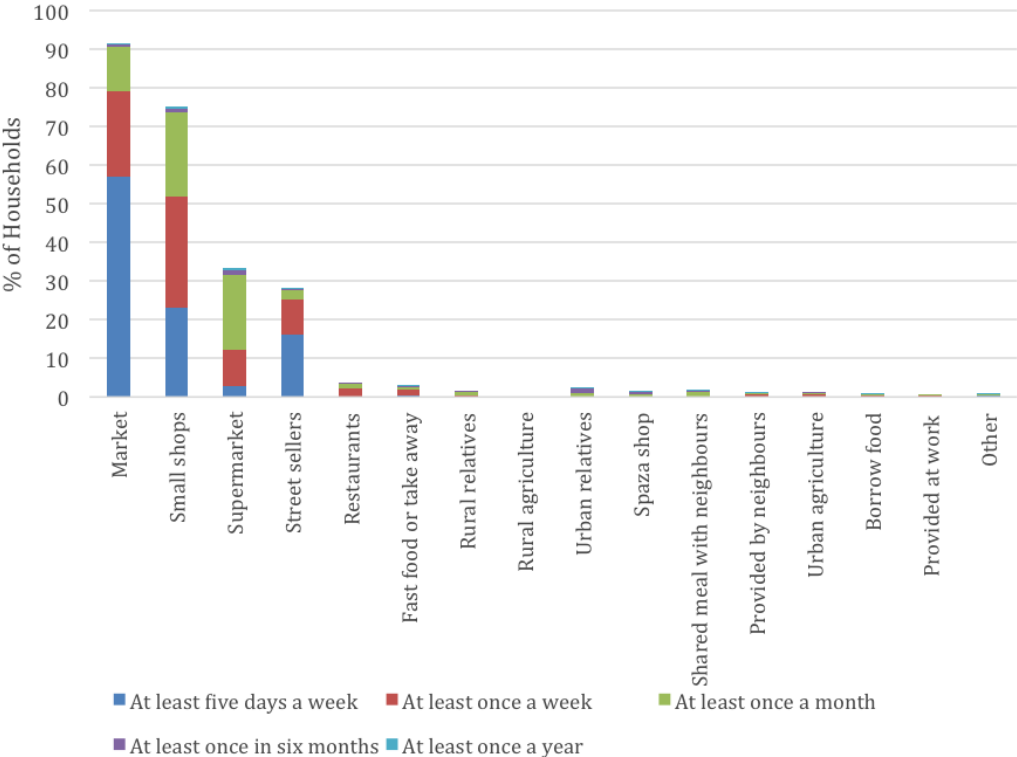
**TABLE 15: Aspirations for Food Vending Business in Next Three Years**

	No.	%
I intend to expand my business operations and own several businesses	554	55.0
I intend to be working in formal employment instead	191	18.9
I intend to move my business into the formal economy	190	18.8
I intend to expand my business to other locations in the city/area	130	12.9
I intend to retire from running a business	42	4.2
I intend to relocate my business to another city	18	1.8
I intend to return to my home area to live	18	1.8
I intend to move to another country to live	5	0.5
<i>Note: Multiple-response question</i>		

## 10. CONCLUSION

Maputo's food markets play an integral role in the functioning of the urban food system and provide an abundant food source for the city's residents. The HCP household food security survey showed that markets are the most popular food source in Maputo. Over 90% of sampled households regularly shop for food at the markets and over 50% do so at least five days per week (Figure 10). The markets also provide many of the city's informal food vendors with relatively safe spaces in which to conduct their business. As such, they play an important part in the functioning of the broader informal food sector (which includes roadside vendors, street sellers, mobile vendors, and backyard stalls).

**FIGURE 10: Frequency of Accessing Food from Different Sources**



Source: Raimundo et al (2018: 26)

The major findings of this survey of food vendors operating in and around Maputo’s markets include:

- Women make up 76% of food vendors within the markets. However, male food vendors tend to have access to more capital to invest in their business.
- Informal food vending as an occupation tends to be dominated by those with limited formal education. Of the respondents, 92% had not completed high school, and 0.1% had completed university or college. Around 10% had no formal education.
- The primary motivation for entering the informal food sector is the need to make money to survive. Few vendors had been in formal employment and those who had tended to be employed in low-paid jobs such as domestic service and manual labour.
- Although it is important to view these vendors as running micro-enterprises, they are not disconnected from their households. Business income is used to support dependants in various ways and food from the business is also consumed in the household. This means, in effect, that business growth is constrained by household needs.
- Despite the fact that the vendors appear to be necessity-driven survivalists rather than opportunistic entrepreneurs, many have a strong entrepreneurial

orientation. Their desire to run their own business is an important factor in the decision to start a food vending business. Vendors also noted that they wanted more control over their own time and to be their own boss. Food vending was seen as an opportunity to learn skills and do something new.

- Vegetables are the most common form of produce sold in the markets and there is a wide variety available for purchase. Onions, tomatoes, garlic, butter beans, and nuts are sold by most vendors. Cereals and meat of various kinds are available but not as common.
- Food items are most often procured from wholesalers, while purchasing directly from factories or from supermarkets is extremely rare. A few items are primarily procured from small formal retail shops, and three items (pumpkin leaves, lettuce, and a variety of cabbage) come directly from farms. Almost no food that is self-produced (by, for example, urban agriculture) is sold in the markets.
- Rather than competing with other vendors through undercutting, vendors prefer to negotiate prices with their customers, give discounts to loyal customers and allow them to buy on credit. Just over two-thirds of the vendors said they have regular customers and many stock food items based on the demands of these customers.
- Competition with other vendors is easily the most important challenge with 81% experiencing this often/sometimes. Related challenges, such as too few customers and insufficient sales, are also common. Few vendors saw competition with supermarkets as a problem, although most said that suppliers charge too much and just over half that they experience problems with customers not paying their debts.
- Improving their access to credit and building their skills set through training programs is often pushed as a solution to making informal entrepreneurs more competitive and effective. This assumes that informal sector enterprises are cash-deprived and that vendors lack the skills needed to succeed. However, less than 10% of those surveyed said that lack of access to credit or not having the necessary skills was a problem for them.
- While a few vendors are able to earn significant income, net profits are generally low once household and business expenses are factored in. For example, only one-third of the vendors had profits of more than MZN4,000 (USD66) while another 30% reported profits of less than MZN1,000 (USD16). Some 22% had profits of less than MZN500 (USD8).
- Only a few food vendors use mobile technology as a strategy to operate their business: 12% use mobile phones to take orders from customers and 8% use mobile phones to receive payments from customers. Only 5% use mobile phones to coordinate with suppliers and other vendors. The potential for improving their operations using IT is therefore considerable.

- In the markets, vendors seem able to operate in relative safety with limited experience of crime/theft, and harassment by the authorities. This is not true for all vendors in the city, particularly street vendors, but market environments are spaces in which food vendors can operate in relative freedom and safety.

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The food markets in Maputo, Mozambique, play an integral role in the functioning of the urban food system and provide an abundant food source for the city's residents. The Hungry Cities Partnership household food security survey found that over 90% of sampled households regularly shop for food at the markets and more than half do so at least five days per week. The markets also provide Maputo's informal food vendors with relatively safe spaces in which to conduct their business. In most cities of the Global South, including Maputo, the informal food economy comprises a dense and diverse network of informal markets, suppliers, transporters, mobile traders, hawkers, retailers, and street food vendors making food more accessible and affordable in low-income areas. The informal sector is thus critical to the food security of poor urban households in rapidly growing cities in the Global South. While the vibrancy of the sector is everywhere apparent, research devoted to understanding the structure, dynamics, and impacts of informal food systems under conditions of hyper-urbanization has been limited. By working in an interdisciplinary context with mixed methodologies and across different cities, the Hungry Cities Partnership aims to add considerably to our understanding of common elements and differences across the Global South.

