



MiFOOD Network

GLOBAL MIGRATION & FOOD SECURITY

RESEARCH AND WRITING WORKSHOP

Tuesday, August 5 - Friday, August 8, 2025

Room 131, Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo, Canada

Participants: Bernard Owusu, Elizabeth Onyango, Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, Ines Raimundo, Jonathan Crush, Maria Salamone, Mercedes Eguiguren, Monica Velazquez, Mulugeta Dinbabo, Naomi Sunu, Natalie Dietrich Jones, Ndeyapo Nickanor, Neil Arya, Sean Sithole, Stanley Egenti, Sujata Ramachandran, and Zhenzhong Si.

About the Workshop: The CIHR-funded project “Assessing and Mitigating the Food Insecurity Consequences of COVID-19 Public Health Measures on Marginalized Refugees and Migrants in Canada, Latin America and Africa” and the NFRF and IDRC funded project “Women Feeding Cities Project: Building a Gender-Transformative, Resilient, and Sustainable Informal Food Sector for COVID-19 Recovery” have reached their final stage of synthesizing and disseminating research findings through both academic and non-academic channels.

To support this process and foster cross-project collaboration, the MiFOOD team is hosting a **Research and Writing Workshop** at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Canada. This workshop will bring together team members from Canada, Namibia, Mozambique, Jamaica, Ecuador, Mexico, and South Africa to share knowledge and strengthen writing skills. This event will focus on key aspects of academic writing, including paper conceptualization, literature review, and data analysis, while also providing dedicated time for drafting and refining research outputs.

During the workshop, participants will give presentations and work on their outputs for at least one of the two upcoming publications of the MiFOOD Network: a chapter based on research for the CIHR Project in the book, **Living Through COVID-19 as Migrants and Refugees: Food Security, Gender, and Health Impacts** to be published by Springer Nature, or an article manuscript based on research for the Women Feeding Cities Project or the MiFOOD Project WS-2 for the proposed Special Issue in the journal Sustainability titled: **Bridging Informal Divides: Migrant Lives in Urban Food Systems in the Global South**.

Day 1	Tuesday, August 5th, 2025
--------------	---

Session 1:	Welcome & Introduction	9- 9:30 am
-------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------

Jonathan Crush	Workshop Goals
----------------	----------------

Session 2:	CIHR Project Book - I	9:30-10:50 am
-------------------	------------------------------	----------------------

Chair:	Zhenzhong Si
---------------	---------------------

Zhenzhong Si	<i>The Implications of COVID-19 Policy Responses in Canada for Food Systems and Vulnerable Populations</i>
--------------	--

Sujata Ramachandran	<i>Caring Through a Crisis: Refugee Women in Kitchener-Waterloo, Food Insecurity and the Gendered Burdens of COVID-19</i>
---------------------	---

Mercedes Eguiguren	<i>Crisis Governance and the Neglect of Rights: Pandemic-Era Policy and Migrant Exclusion in Ecuador</i>
--------------------	--

Questions & Comments	
----------------------	--

Morning Break:	10:50-11 am
-----------------------	--------------------

Session 3:	CIHR Project Book - II	11-12:40 pm
-------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------

Chair:	Zhenzhong Si
---------------	---------------------

Sean Sithole	<i>COVID-19 Pandemic Precarity and Urban Food Insecurity: Zimbabwean, Somali, and DRC Migrants in Cape Town, South Africa</i>
--------------	---

Mulugeta Dinbabo	<i>Uncovering International Migration and Remittance Patterns in Southern Africa During COVID-19: Compelling Evidence from Cape Town, South Africa</i>
------------------	--

Jonathan Crush	<i>Lockdown Hunger: Migrant and Refugee Food Insecurity in South Africa During the COVID-19 Crisis</i>
----------------	--

Questions & Comments	
----------------------	--

Lunch Break:	12:40-1:40 pm
---------------------	----------------------

Session 4:	Women Feeding Cities - Special Journal Issue	1:40-3 pm
-------------------	---	------------------

Chair:	Mulugeta Dinbabo
---------------	-------------------------

Ines Raimundo	<i>Nhanguistas and the 'Accept us as intermediaries, or your merchandise will rot' Slogan: Resilience of Cross-Border Traders During COVID-19 Lockdown and Curfew</i>
---------------	---

Elizabeth Thomas-Hope & Ines Raimundo	<i>COVID-19 Reduced Business Operational Time, But It Didn't Take Away the Role of Women to Continue Feeding their Families and the Residents of their City</i>
---------------------------------------	---

Ndeyapo Nickanor	<i>Do Local Policies Support Them: Understanding How Women in the Informal Food Sector in Namibia Navigate through Periods of Crisis</i>
------------------	--

Question & Comments	
---------------------	--

Afternoon Break: **3-3:10 pm**

Session 5: **Women Feeding Cities or MiFOOD WS2** **3:10-5 pm**

Chair: **Mulugeta Dinbabo**

Sean Sithole *Precarity and Resilience: African Migrant Women, and the Informal Food System in Cape Town, South Africa*

Elizabeth Onyango *Food Vendors as Caregivers and Supporters of Urban Household Livelihoods in Times of Emergency: The COVID-19 Pandemic Experiences of Women Vendors in Kisumu, Kenya*

Natalie Dietrich Jones *COVID-19's Impact on Women and Men Informal Food Vendors in Kingston: A Gendered Analysis*

Monica Velazquez *Daily Lives and Commercial Activities of Women Selling Food in Mexico City Public Spaces*

Questions & Comments

NOTE: For sessions 2-5, participants will present the aims and objectives of their book chapter or journal article, the dataset(s) that the publication is based on (how it was collected; what it consists of; its format; etc.), plus what we know so far in terms of key findings (from a Research Brief or MiFOOD Paper).

Day 2 **Wednesday, August 6th, 2025**

Session 1: **Literature Review - Identifying Relevant Materials** **9-12:30 pm**

Chair: **Sujata Ramachandran**

The objective of this session is to identify and critically evaluate the literature for its relevance and scholarly contribution, isolate patterns, tensions, and gaps in the literature, discuss the key ideas that connect with the participants' writing, and strategically position their work within the scholarly conversation or policy debates.

Participants will be divided into two groups based on their project-related research: the CIHR Project and the WFC Project. Using SciSpace, Google Scholar and university databases, group members will identify the relevant journal articles, book chapters and reports that discuss the linkages between COVID-19, migrants/refugees, and food security (for the CIHR Project) and the pandemic, informal economy, food systems, and gender in urban areas (for the WFC Project).

Morning Break: **10:50-11 am**

Session 1 continued until lunch break. **11-12:30 pm**

Lunch Break: **12:30-1:30 pm**

Session 2:	Key Themes, Trends & Gaps	1:30-3 pm
Chair:	Sujata Ramachandran	

After completing their annotated bibliographies, each group will report back by highlighting the most relevant or surprising sources they found and identifying any common themes, trends, or gaps that emerged across the literature. Participants will also recommend one standout resource that others should be aware of. They will reflect on any challenges or insights gained from the process of summarizing and evaluating the materials.

Afternoon Break:	3-3:10 pm
-------------------------	------------------

Report back continued until end of day.	3:10-5 pm
---	------------------

Day 3	Thursday, August 7th, 2025
--------------	--

Morning:	Learning Journey	
Tour	St Jacobs Farmers' Market	Pick up at hotel 8:45 am

Lunch Break:	12-1 pm
---------------------	----------------

Session 1:	Data & Interpretation	1-3 pm
-------------------	----------------------------------	---------------

Chair:	Elizabeth Thomas-Hope	
Stanley Egenti	Deepening quantitative data interpretation	(10-15 mins)
Elizabeth Onyango	Interpreting qualitative data with rigour	(10-15 mins)
Naomi Sunu	Qualitative analysis using NVivo	(10-15 mins)
Bernard Owusu	Conducting a scoping review	(10-15 mins)
	Writing insightful analysis	
	Group critique of interpretive clarity and nuance	

Afternoon Break:	3:30-3:40 pm
-------------------------	---------------------

Session 2:	Photovoice Research - I (Process)	3:40-4:40 pm
-------------------	--	---------------------

Chair:	Elizabeth Onyango	
Focus:	How to conduct photovoice ethically and reflexively, providing examples from their research. It will also involve a brief structured discussion on the process, including challenges, what worked, and what did not.	

Day 4	Friday, August 8th, 2025
--------------	--

Session 1:	Photovoice Research - II (Analysis)	9-10:30 am
-------------------	--	-------------------

Chairs:	Elizabeth Onyango & Mercedes Eguiguren
----------------	---

Focus:

(a) Techniques for analyzing visual narratives, captions, and group discussions (20 minutes)

(b) Integrating photovoice findings into scholarly writing and policy-focused outputs (20 minutes)

Breakout Group Discussion: (40 minutes)

Groups will be divided into those who have already conducted a photovoice study and those with less familiarity.) Participants will be provided with sample photos and selected text from focus group discussions from photovoice studies; they will be asked to interpret these two sets of textual sources.

Debrief: (10 minutes)

What are some key aspects that emerged from the discussions?

Morning Break:	10:30-10:40 am
-----------------------	-----------------------

Session 1:	10:40-12:30pm
-------------------	----------------------

Chair:	Jonathan Crush
---------------	-----------------------

Participants will work on writing their draft chapters or papers for the book and special issue.

Lunch Break:	12:30-1:15 pm
---------------------	----------------------

Session 2:	1:15-3 pm
-------------------	------------------

Participants will continue to work on writing their draft chapters or papers for the book and special issue. They will report on their progress in a wrap-up session.

Afternoon Break:	3-3:10 pm
-------------------------	------------------

Session 2:	3:10-4:30 pm
-------------------	---------------------

Writing Session continued.

Wrap Up / Closing Remarks:	4:30-5 pm
-----------------------------------	------------------

Report on progress, remarks, next steps, etc.

ABSTRACTS

1. The Implications of COVID-19 Policy Responses in Canada for Food Systems and Vulnerable Populations

Zhenzhong Si, Balsillie School of International Affairs

Various federal and provincial measures were introduced in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic to contain the spread of the virus and mitigate its socioeconomic impacts. These policy measures and associated programs provided financial relief, increased food bank support, and targeted assistance to vulnerable populations. Yet, temporary support measures could not fully address structural food security challenges. This chapter provides a systemic review of Canada's policy responses to the pandemic, with a particular focus on their implications for food systems and food security. The study points out that temporary support measures could not fully address structural food security challenges facing vulnerable groups. It thus calls for targeted policies that enhance the weak links in the food system to address structural challenges over the long term.

2. Caring Through a Crisis: Refugee Women in Kitchener-Waterloo, Food Insecurity and the Gendered Burdens of COVID-19

Sujata Ramachandran, Balsillie School of International Affairs and Wilfrid Laurier University

This paper examines the gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on resettled refugees in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, drawing on both quantitative survey data and in-depth qualitative interviews. Our findings highlight the disproportionate burdens borne by women, especially single mothers and members of female-centred households, across domains of unpaid care work, food insecurity, economic vulnerability, and mental well-being. Public health measures such as lockdowns and school closures intensified existing gendered divisions of labour, as women took on the bulk of domestic responsibilities, including caregiving, cleaning, homeschooling, and meal preparation. These responsibilities were further compounded by limited access to public services, job losses, and language barriers, restricting their ability to engage in paid employment. Female participants reported elevated stress, reduced autonomy, and, in some cases, the need to rely on older children for income support. Food insecurity emerged as a particularly gendered concern, with women not only managing constrained food budgets and disrupted access to culturally appropriate foods but also often sacrificing their own nutritional needs for their children. Women were more likely to report that caregiving responsibilities prevented them from accessing food, and many sent remittances to family abroad despite local hardships. However, the pandemic curtailed women's capacity to remit, evoking feelings of guilt, anxiety and helplessness. These patterns underscore the multiple vulnerabilities of refugee women, whose roles as caregivers, breadwinners, and remitters were all strained during the pandemic.

3. Crisis Governance and the Neglect of Rights: Pandemic-Era Policy and Migrant Exclusion in Ecuador

Mercedes Eguiguren, Balsillie School of International Affairs and Wilfrid Laurier University

This chapter examines how COVID-19 policy measures in Ecuador affected migrants' access to rights, with a particular focus on food security. It aims to systematize existing literature on three interrelated themes: the State's pandemic response, social policy, and migration policy in Ecuador. It maps the measures introduced to contain the pandemic alongside social protection mechanisms and migration-related interventions, identifying intersections and gaps among these domains. The chapter proposes a typology of COVID-19-era policies toward migrants, building on and adapting previous typologies developed in the regional literature. It also analyzes the impacts of these measures on migrants' rights and needs, situating Ecuador's approach within two broader regional trends: the humanitarian turn in Latin American migration governance and the convergence of austerity and authoritarianism in responses to social crisis. The analysis is based on an in-depth review of scholarly literature, official government documents, press releases, and reports produced by international and local organizations. This material, collected in early 2023 and updated in 2025, includes gray literature and scientific publications focused on the pandemic, social policy, migration policy, and sociodemographic trends. Preliminary findings indicate that the pandemic caused widespread socioeconomic disruption in Ecuador, intensifying pre-existing inequalities. Government responses prioritized containment and mobility restrictions over social protection, disproportionately affecting groups already living in precarious conditions, especially those working in the informal economy, the elderly, the urban poor, and migrants. Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers were excluded from national protection measures, both de facto and de jure, relying instead on limited emergency support from international organizations and some local authorities. While Ecuador's food production and distribution chains remained relatively stable, declining household incomes led to widespread reductions in food affordability and increased food insecurity across the population.

4. COVID-19 Pandemic Precarity and Urban Food Insecurity: Zimbabwean, Somali, and DRC Migrants in Cape Town, South Africa

Sean Sithole, Balsillie School of International Affairs and University of the Western Cape

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted urban food systems, healthcare, social and economic livelihoods globally. In Southern Africa, African migrant populations in South African cities experienced disproportionate impacts. They faced heightened vulnerability due to stringent lockdowns, the disruption of the formal and informal economies, job losses, layoffs, reduced working hours, and irregular income flows, as well as exclusion from essential services such as healthcare, education, government assistance and social safety nets. Emerging research has introduced the concept of pandemic food precarity to capture how pre-existing and ongoing structural inequalities and challenges, such as restrictive immigration policies, systemic harassment, widespread xenophobia, poverty, unemployment and limited access to social and legal protections, and, more importantly, pandemic lockdowns, exacerbated food insecurity during the crisis. The study is based on a 2023 survey of 844 migrants and 32 qualitative interviews in Cape Town, with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from Zimbabwe, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The research explores the

intersection of prevailing difficulties, pandemic containment measures, and post-pandemic food insecurity. The government's public health lockdown measures were implemented to mitigate and contain the transmission of the virus. Simultaneously, the lockdowns worsened the vulnerable livelihoods of migrants, deepening their precarity, exclusion and food insecurity. The findings contribute to a growing body of literature on migration and urban food security. They highlight the urgent need for inclusive policy frameworks that address the multifaceted vulnerabilities of migrant communities during times of crisis.

5. *Uncovering International Migration and Remittance Patterns in Southern Africa During COVID-19: Compelling Evidence from Cape Town, South Africa*

Mulugeta Dinbabo, University of the Western Cape

This study examines the remittance behaviours of African migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in South Africa, in the context of the under-researched impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and intra-African remittance flows. South African cities, particularly Cape Town, are popular destinations for African migrants pursuing economic opportunities, political stability, and access to services. A crucial aspect of this migration is the financial and welfare support, particularly cash and in-kind remittances, including food and groceries, that migrants transfer to families and communities in their countries of origin. Remittances play a vital role in poverty reduction, food insecurity alleviation, enhancing household welfare, and promoting regional economic development. This research is based on surveys and in-depth interviews conducted in 2023 in Cape Town with African migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from Zimbabwe, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The findings reveal that the pandemic and its aftermath significantly disrupted remittance flows due to lockdowns (measures included travel bans, mobility restrictions and border closures, resulting in limited access to informal channels), job losses, lost or reduced income, and economic instability. Notably, migrants demonstrated resilience by continuing to remit, underscoring their commitment, sacrifices and the human dimension of migration. During the pandemic, there was also an accelerated adoption of digital-mobile remittance channels, which were critical pathways to overcome challenges such as delivery delays, high transaction costs and limited mobility. Looking ahead, maximizing digital infrastructure, easing regulatory barriers, and promoting financial and digital inclusion, particularly for the unbanked, undocumented individuals in underserved areas (such as rural and remote regions) and informal communities, are essential steps toward sustaining and enhancing remittance flows. These insights underscore the need for targeted policy attention to support the welfare and economic resilience of migrants across the region.

6. *Lockdown Hunger: Migrant and Refugee Food Insecurity in South Africa During the COVID-19 Crisis*

Jonathan Crush, Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University and University of the Western Cape

Our MiFOOD Policy Audit No. 1 – South Africa at War: Food Insecurity, Migrant Exclusion and COVID-19 Policies– provides a comprehensive overview of the course of the pandemic in South Africa and the nature and impact of the government's policy response, with particular reference to an estimated 2

million migrants and refugees in the country. In 2024, we converted the first part of the report into an invited book chapter: "Policing the Pandemic: Migrants in South African Cities During the COVID-19 Lockdown." In S. Irudaya Rajan (Ed.), *Handbook on Migration, COVID-19 and Cities* (Edward Elgar, 2025). The presentation will first provide a brief overview of the contents of Policy Audit No. 1. Then it will describe the process of conversion into the first book chapter. Finally, the presentation will describe the plan to convert the second part of the Audit into a book chapter for our forthcoming volume – *Living Through COVID-19 as Migrants and Refugees: Food Security, Gender, and Health Impacts*.

7. *Nhonguistas and the 'Accept us as intermediaries, or your Merchandise will Rot' Slogan: Resilience of Cross-Border Traders During COVID-19 Lockdown and Curfew*

Ines Raimundo, Eduardo Mondlane University

The COVID-19 pandemic had devastating effects comparable to war, as the restriction of crossings abruptly halted food cross-border trade. In Maputo, where urban dwellers relied heavily on food imports from South Africa, the absence of an urban agricultural policy worsened the crisis. The situation nearly led to a 'State of Emergency' due to severe food shortages, as Mukhero (cross-border trade) activities were restricted, and traditional trade channels collapsed under mobility restrictions. On the Mozambican side, a curfew was enforced, while South Africa imposed a lockdown. Strict border control measures permitted only trucks to transport goods, eliminating previously standard transportation methods such as vans, private vehicles, minibuses, and individuals with negative COVID-19 test results. These restrictions made cross-border traders' businesses decline, with reduced food items for city dwellers. The Nhonguistas found a way of doing business as intermediaries, as they found ways of circumventing movement restrictions at borders. They emerged at the beginning as individual initiatives but now have become a syndical movement with control from the borders up to the wholesale markets such as Zimpeto. They control who buys and the prices and declare themselves the Mukhero trade's saviours. As COVID-19 restrictions eased, Nhonguistas consolidated their role in regional trade by intermediating wholesale markets' supply chains. They maintained direct relations with transporters, mukheristas, and buyers, putting Mozambican Mukheristas at risk and struggling to recover their position after the pandemic. The following features characterize them: 1) the controllers of distribution channels through dictating prices and maintaining dominance over cross-border trade, making both small vendors and large retailers increasingly dependent on their services; 2) they have the 'clients' of the season of COVID-19 as some Mukheristas gave up from the business due to lockdown and curfew measures; 3) taking advantage of the absence of formalized policies governing informal traders to retain their autonomy they are the ones who know how to deal with clients of different status, from wealthy to poor; 4) They use ways of harassing the Mukheristas through the slogan—"Accept us as intermediaries, or your merchandise will rot"—underscored their self-perceived indispensability in the supply chain. This paper is based on field research and interviews conducted in the Women Feeding Cities study in the Zimpeto, Magoanine, and KaTembe Markets in the Municipality of Maputo. One of the key research questions explored was: How could cross-border trade survive with a lockdown in South Africa and a curfew in Mozambique? The findings stress the resilience and adaptability of informal trade networks, which include the significant role of Nhonguistas and how they transitioned from the COVID-19 crisis and gained the opportunity to become the indispensable people between Mukheristas and consumers. The study highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, policy gaps in urban agriculture, and dependence on the regional market have contributed to Nhonguistas gaining ground as agents of informal trade, ensuring their continued dominance in the post-pandemic businesses.

8. COVID-19 Reduced Business Operational Time, But It Didn't Take Away the Role of Women to Continue Feeding their Families and the Residents of their City

Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, University of the West Indies and Ines Raimundo, Eduardo Mondlane University

The city of Xai-Xai, the capital of Gaza Province in southern Mozambique, despite its proximity to Maputo, remains dependent on agricultural activities, fishing (collecting shellfish, crustaceans, and river fish), commerce and the migratory labour of men. Despite the sharp reduction in recruitment, men continue to be involved in labour migration, and women, on the verge of experiencing the food crisis of the past, find themselves forced to take the reins and engage in commerce. Trade has two channels: direct sales, which can be door-to-door, in the market, or at stalls; and indirect sales, which are through third parties (wholesale sales) and intermediaries. This route was abruptly interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, not due to the city's high infection rate, but rather because of a curfew that prevented travel to Maputo and a lockdown in South Africa that prohibited people's movement. The COVID-19 pandemic reduced the volume of business, but did not prevent women from continuing to feed the city. Strategies were employed to circumvent this impediment, including using products from their farms, replacing those from South Africa, utilizing online commerce, and using intermediaries. The paper is the result of data analysis from 250 respondents and two Focus Group interviews conducted at the Municipal Market and in the Patrice Lumumba Neighbourhood. Everyone felt the impact of COVID-19. Still, the damage varied depending on the size of the business and the government's limited capacity to support the management of health crises of large global proportions. Regardless of the challenges posed by COVID-19, the women of Xai-Xai, a medium-sized city, never relinquished the task of feeding their families and the city's dwellers.

9. Do Local Policies Support Them: Understanding How Women in the Informal Food Sector in Namibia Navigate through Periods of Crisis

Ndeyapo Nickanor, University of Namibia

The informal food sector, consisting of registered and unregistered entrepreneurs, plays a major role in providing livelihood, household food security and generating income for the urban poor in Namibia. The majority of the informal food vendors are women. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the informal food sector severely, disrupting the business operations and profitability, increasing gendered household responsibilities, gender-based violence, household food insecurity and weakening their physical and mental well-being. However, our study found that although women in the informal food sector were severely affected, they are back in the same business, because for them, it is a means of livelihood improvement, if not basic survival. Are the existing local policies supporting women in the informal food sector, or do they neglect the informal sector or even actively disrupt it, exacerbating vulnerabilities during crises, as some of these enterprises are not recognized or protected under existing legal and regulatory frameworks? The study calls for inclusive dialogues to formulate gender-sensitive policy frameworks that recognize and integrate the informal food economy into urban planning and disaster response strategies, as the significance and permanence of the Namibian informal economy cannot be overstated.

10. *Precarity and Resilience: African Migrant Women, and the Informal Food System in Cape Town, South Africa*

Sean Sithole, Balsillie School of International Affairs and University of the Western Cape

The mobility of international migrants continues to be shaped by constant economic crises, environmental stress, and political instability, particularly across the global South. In Southern Africa, South Africa has emerged as a popular destination for African migrants attracted by its comparatively stronger economy, prospects of improved livelihoods and relative political stability. Notably, migration trends have increasingly illustrated a growing presence of feminization of migration, thus African women are migrating independently and undertaking primary responsibility for household income. African women demonstrate significant agency through their roles in both economic and social contexts. However, restricted access to formal employment forces many African migrant women to operate in the informal economy. For example, the informal food sector serves as a means of sustaining their livelihoods and meeting essential needs. Importantly, informal food vending plays a vital role in ensuring affordable and accessible food for communities while supporting income generation and sustainable livelihoods. However, African migrant women often work under precarious conditions in the informal economy and usually face intersecting challenges, including gendered vulnerability, poverty, crime, systemic exclusion, xenophobia, restrictive immigration policies, public health crises, and limited access to legal and social protection. This study contributes to the debates on migration and food security by examining the experiences, prospects, challenges, resilience, and adaptation of African migrant women food vendors in the informal urban economy. The study is based on both quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews in Cape Town. It offers insights into African migrants, informal economies, and urban food systems by providing contemporary perspectives on how migrant women benefit and contribute through food vending, navigate precarity, and build resilience within the urban contexts of Southern Africa.

11. *Food vendors as Caregivers and Supporters of Urban Household Livelihoods in Times of Emergency: The COVID-19 Pandemic Experiences of Women Vendors in Kisumu, Kenya*

Elizabeth Onyango, University of Alberta

The COVID-19 pandemic presented immense challenges to the informal food economies. As the control measures, such as the implementation of curfews and other movement restrictions, were rolled out, the informal food businesses experienced significant challenges that influenced their ability to contribute to urban household food security and the economic livelihoods. In secondary cities in the global South, female vendors played a significant role in maintaining their households' livelihoods and the urban household food security. However, very few studies have explored the substantial role played by the women food vendors during the pandemic. In this paper, we explore the contributions to urban household livelihoods and food security during the pandemic, drawing from evidence from our recent qualitative study (in-depth interviews [n=20] and 4 focus group discussions [n=40]) with informal food business owners. We discuss: a) the significance of the informal food vending business in income generation, household livelihoods and food security; b) the gendered nature of the contributions; and c) vulnerability of the businesses/livelihoods and the food system. We conclude the paper with a brief discussion of the key findings and the policy implications in emergency preparedness.

12. COVID-19's Impact on Women and Men Informal Food Vendors in Kingston: A Gendered Analysis

Natalie Dietrich Jones, University of the West Indies

This paper presents a gendered analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on informal food vendors in Kingston, Jamaica. The paper draws on data collected from 410 surveys, desk research, and qualitative interviews with stakeholders involved in the COVID-19 responses at the municipal and national levels. Based on preliminary analysis, in terms of pandemic impact, a significant difference was observed between men and women. Women informal food vendors reported higher perceived impact from the pandemic compared to men. This finding aligns with the broader global literature suggesting that women bore a disproportionate share of the pandemic's burdens, including job loss, increased caregiving responsibilities, and emotional strain. Notwithstanding, women food vendors reported higher scores than their male counterparts for coping strategies employed during the pandemic. The findings suggest the need for a nuanced approach to gender-sensitive research, since men adopted more abrupt or conservative responses to the economic shocks induced by COVID-19. The study also points to the need for greater accounting of the significance of informal food vending in local supply chains and food security in Jamaica. This would include the design of gender-sensitive policy responses which acknowledge the disproportionate impacts of crises on vulnerable female populations, such as women informal food vendors.

13. Daily Lives and Commercial Activities of Women Selling Food in Mexico City Public Spaces

Monica Velazquez, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM)

The objective of this paper is to analyze the commercial strategies and daily lives of women who sell food on the streets of Mexico City. Additionally, the study aims to explore the role of women in Mexico City's informal food system during the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey of food sector merchants was conducted, focusing on capturing differences between owners and employees and between men and women. In addition to this survey, 35 in-depth interviews were conducted with women sellers, most of whom were food business owners. The analysis of the survey and interviews reveals significant inequalities between men and women in the face of the difficulties arising from the pandemic, which exacerbated structural vulnerabilities such as economic insecurity, lack of social protection, and excessive domestic workload among the women interviewed. It also notes that women demonstrated resilience and innovation through informal support networks, highlighting their economic role. Finally, the interviews point to the need to improve public support policies in times of crisis, such as the pandemic.