Urban Food Futures

Position Paper

June 2025

Working with Informality for Food Systems Transformation and Resilient Communities

Food vendor offering fish in Mukuru. *AMT, 2023*

Scan the QR code to explore our webpage on this initiative.

(TMG) ThinkTankforSustainability
Töpfer Müller Gaßner

Contents

Introduction

Hunger surged globally during the COVID-19 crisis and has remained acutely high in many places (FAO et al., 2024). Today, less than a fifth of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets are on track (United Nations, 2024). In lower-income countries and fragile contexts—where the global polycrisis of compounding economic instability, geopolitical tensions, and climate shocks are most severely eroding stability—extreme poverty is not only persistent but, in some cases, also rising (Yonzan et al., 2023). In these settings, hunger persists as extreme poverty cuts off the means to secure affordable and nutritious food. Progress on SDG 2—Zero Hunger—has stagnated in such contexts (OECD, 2025), underscoring the urgent need to rethink how we address hunger in fragile settings. Meaningful progress on ending hunger will require a renewed focus on settings where extreme poverty, instability, and food insecurity converge most acutely.

The necessity for a renewed focus emerges not only in the context of a global polycrisis but also amid dramatic cuts to international cooperation budgets. Countries with limited access to private financing—especially fragile and low-income countries—will continue to rely on grants and concessional loans to sustain critical nutrition and food security initiatives (FAO et al., 2024). This challenge demands renewed global commitments to mobilize and channel available financial resources towards achieving Zero Hunger in places where needs and vulnerabilities are most acute. At the same time, investments must be carefully selected to maximize their impact in fragile contexts.

> "1 out of 5 people on the African continent faced hunger in 2023"

Current trends towards rapid urbanization call for food and nutrition security policies that are better aligned with these realities, particularly for informal settlements and low-income neighbourhoods. Although food security policies have often focused on rural areas and increasing production (Battersby & Watson, 2018), this rural bias increasingly fails to reflect ongoing demographic shifts. Today, 57 per cent of the global population lives in cities (Ritchie et al., 2024), with the African continent experiencing some of the highest rates of urban growth (OECD et al., 2025). Millions of urban residents face daily food insecurity, and, in these settings, informal food systems play a central role in ensuring access to food—particularly for the most vulnerable populations. Alongside these systems, informal social protection mechanisms often emerge, serving as critical safety nets for those excluded from formal services. These dynamics require analyses of food and nutrition security in urban areas to focus more systematically on food access and the barriers that constrain it—especially the inequalities linked to gender and income.

The informal sector is an indispensable partner in the progressive realization of the right to food. As noted in a recent analysis, "high levels of informality correlate with areas where high and extreme fragility are concentrated" (OECD, 2025, p. 66). Yet local governments often adopt contradictory approaches towards the informal sector—undermining, rather than recognizing, its potential (Racaud et al., 2018). The research presented in this report demonstrates that the informal sector innovates and adapts in the face of crisis, developing context-specific solutions that could pave new pathways to achieving Zero Hunger. Furthermore, it shows that there are ways to organize and support informal, community-led initiatives to develop into credible partners for governments and development organizations. While this runs counter to the dominant development paradigm of formalization, meaningful progress in the fight against hunger and malnutrition requires a more proactive, collaborative, and inclusive approach to the informal sector.

As budgets for international cooperation shrink in (former) major donor countries, it is crucial to explore innovative pathways to achieving global development targets. This report makes the case for working with informality as one such innovation—an often-overlooked yet significant pathway towards achieving Zero Hunger.

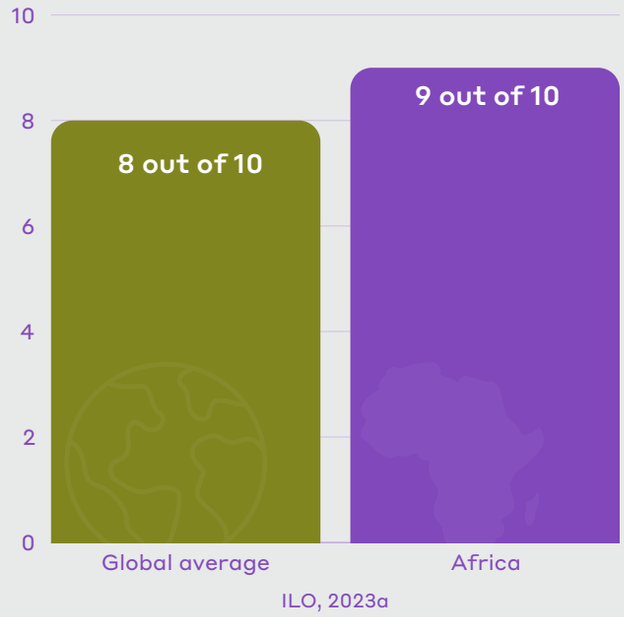
KEY MESSAGE 1. The informal economy offers immense potential as a lever for sustainable development.

Informality is a global phenomenon. Characterized by substantial variation both within and between countries, the informal economy, on average, accounts for 35 per cent of gross domestic product in low- and middle-income countries and 15 per cent in advanced economies (IMF, 2021). Globally, approximately 8 out of 10 economic units operate informally; on the African continent, this figure rises to more than 9 out of 10 economic units (ILO, 2023a).

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023a), **60 per cent of the global workforce—over 2 billion people—are employed in the informal economy.** In over half of low-income countries, informal employment comprises over 90 per cent of total employment (see Figure 1). Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest levels of informality (IMF, 2021), with 84 per cent of employment in Africa being informal (ILO, 2023a). While the share of men and women engaged in informal employment varies between regions, across most of the world, informally employed women are disproportionately concentrated in the most vulnerable segments of the informal economy, such as contributing family work, home-based work, and domestic work (ILO, 2023a).

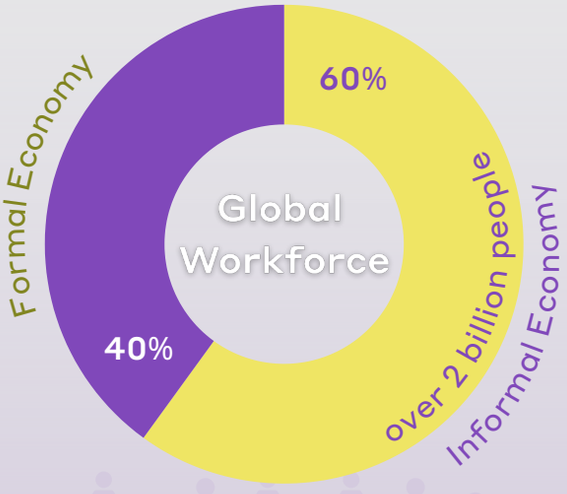
Informal employment spans multiple sectors, particularly small-scale farming, trade, and food-related activities. Within the agricultural sector, informal employment is estimated to exceed 90 per cent globally (ILO, 2018a). A study by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2007), which approximates that around 2.5 billion people consume street food daily, underlines the enormous reach of the informal food trade. Although there is no precise global figure, available data suggests that hundreds of millions of people worldwide work in the informal food trade (ILO, 2023a).

Proportion of informal economic units



ILO, 2023a

"Informal employment exceeds 90% in over half of low-income countries"



ILO, 2023a

Approximately **2.5 billion** people consume **street food** daily

Far from being a temporary condition, the informal economy is here to stay. By 2030, people in sub-Saharan Africa will account for half of all new entrants into the global labour force, necessitating the creation of up to 15 million new jobs annually (IMF, 2024). As the formal job market is unlikely to provide sufficient opportunities to absorb this growth, approximately 90 per cent of new jobs are expected to emerge in the informal economy—particularly in secondary cities and informal settlements (ILO, 2018a).

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, informal employment has largely driven employment recovery in low- and middle-income countries (ILO, 2023b). As a crucial source of livelihood for the majority of people, the informal economy presents a vital opportunity for inclusive and sustainable development.

Vendor sorting carrots in Kangemi post COVID-19. GJIA, 2020

High rates of informality in developing countries

Informal employment rate, latest year

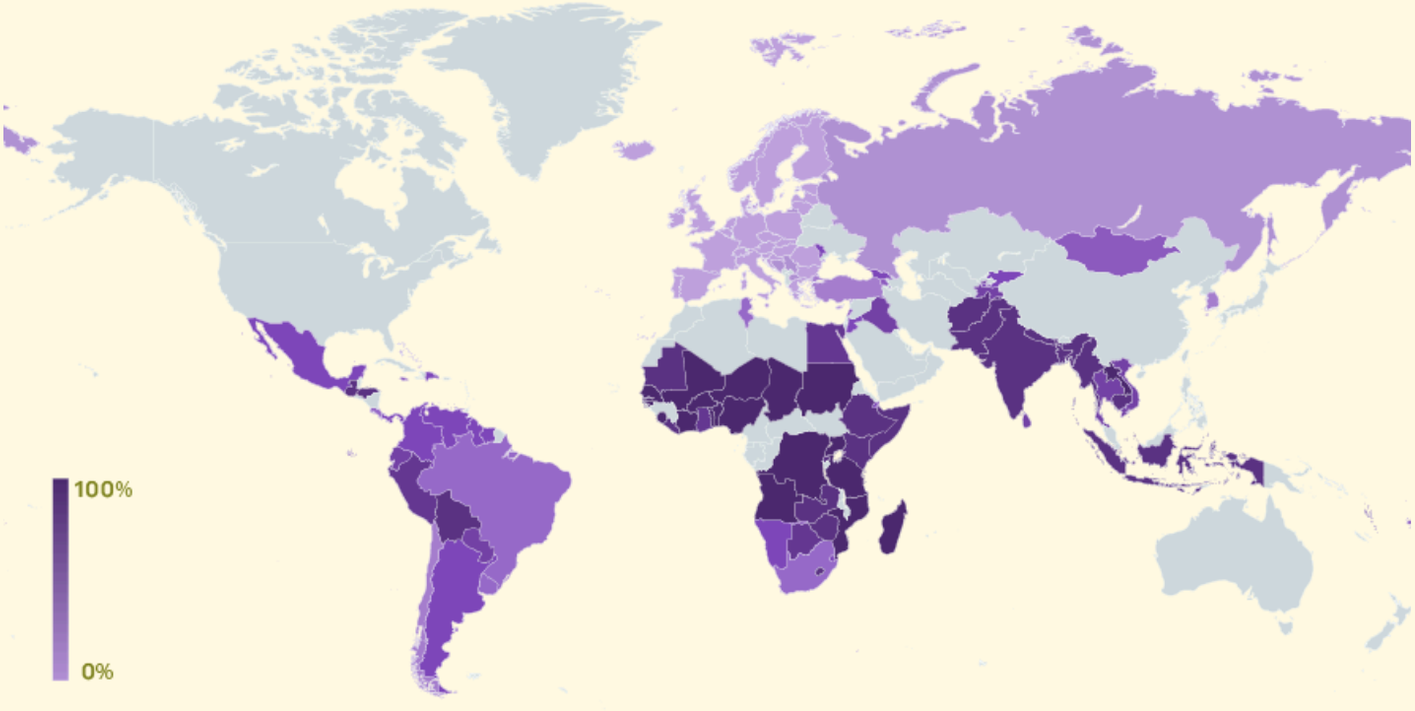


Figure 1: High rates of informality in developing countries. Informal employment rate, latest year (ILOSTAT, 2025)

KEY MESSAGE 2. In the absence of universal social protection, informal, community-led initiatives serve as a safety net, building community resilience.

Universal social protection is fundamental to building more equitable societies and fair economies. Strong social security nets are necessary for protecting the most vulnerable populations who are most exposed to catastrophic harms from the global polycrisis. Yet the persistent gap in social protection coverage remains one of the most pressing development challenges today. Between 2015 and 2023, high-income countries progressed rapidly towards universal social protection, achieving 85.9 per cent coverage (ILO, 2024). In stark contrast, low-income countries remained at a meagre 9.7 per cent, showing minimal improvement (ILO, 2024). As a result, 3.8 billion people, globally, live without any form of formal social protection (ILO, 2024). There has been modest progress in Africa, where coverage rose from 15.2 per cent in 2015 to 19.1 per cent in 2023 (ILO, 2024).

Women face particular challenges in accessing social protection due to structural inequalities, including over-representation in precarious forms of employment—meaning they are less likely to contribute to formal social protection schemes—and a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work as well as gender-specific interruptions in their life cycle (ILO, 2024; UNDP, 2021). Addressing these inequities requires targeted initiatives that strengthen women's economic position and facilitate their access to social protection services.

When formal social protection fails to reach vulnerable populations, informal social protection (ISP) often emerges to fill critical gaps. While formal social protection involves actions by state- and private-sector actors, ISP refers to actions that are not led or regulated by the state (Tandrayen & Kasseeah, 2018). In many informal urban settlements and low-income areas, where formal social protection programmes are weak or absent, ISP provides a similar safety net.

ISP may be categorized into three types: informal assistance, informal insurance, and informal labour market measures (Mumtaz, 2021). In this conceptualization, informal assistance provides immediate relief during times of crisis—such as food sharing, short-term cash support, and childcare—helping to meet basic needs. Informal insurance helps manage long-term risk and uncertainty through community savings groups (e.g. rotating credit schemes), burial societies, and mutual aid. In these ways, individuals contribute to a shared pool of resources that they can access in emergencies, creating a preventive buffer against future shocks. Informal labour market measures build long-term resilience, enhancing livelihoods through vocational support and skills training. Broadly speaking, these forms of ISP are provided by a variety of actors, including local and international non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, immediate and extended family, friends, and community members (Mumtaz, 2021).

The integration of formal and informal social protections offers a promising pathway towards universal social protection. Researchers who argue for this integration and greater recognition of ISP in social policy design and analysis (Mumtaz et al., 2024; Stavropoulou et al., 2017) recognize the role of ISP as a major provider of welfare in the so-called Global South, for instance, in Nigeria and Pakistan (Mumtaz et al., 2024). The potential benefits of this approach are twofold: it can reduce coverage gaps by reaching more of the population and leverage the deep, locally embedded nature of ISP mechanisms to foster a more targeted and effective allocation of resources (Mumtaz et al., 2024).

Our research in Nairobi and Cape Town highlights how ISP mechanisms operate through self-organization and community-led initiatives in informal urban settlements and low-income areas. In Cape Town, community kitchens—mostly established and run by women—provide meals while offering safe spaces for women and children experiencing gender-based violence. Similarly, in the informal settlement of Mukuru in Nairobi, community-led school meal programmes act as informal safety nets, addressing food insecurity and supporting child welfare. Also in Mukuru, women-led eateries increase access to food, extending credit to those who cannot afford to pay.

These initiatives exemplify the contribution of ISP to community resilience and well-being. Channelling financial and institutional support towards these initiatives has the potential to not only strengthen local livelihoods but also reduce the burden of unpaid care work—particularly for women—and build the foundation for more inclusive, community-led social protection models.

SOCIAL INNOVATION 1. A community-run school meal programme in Mukuru informal settlement, Nairobi

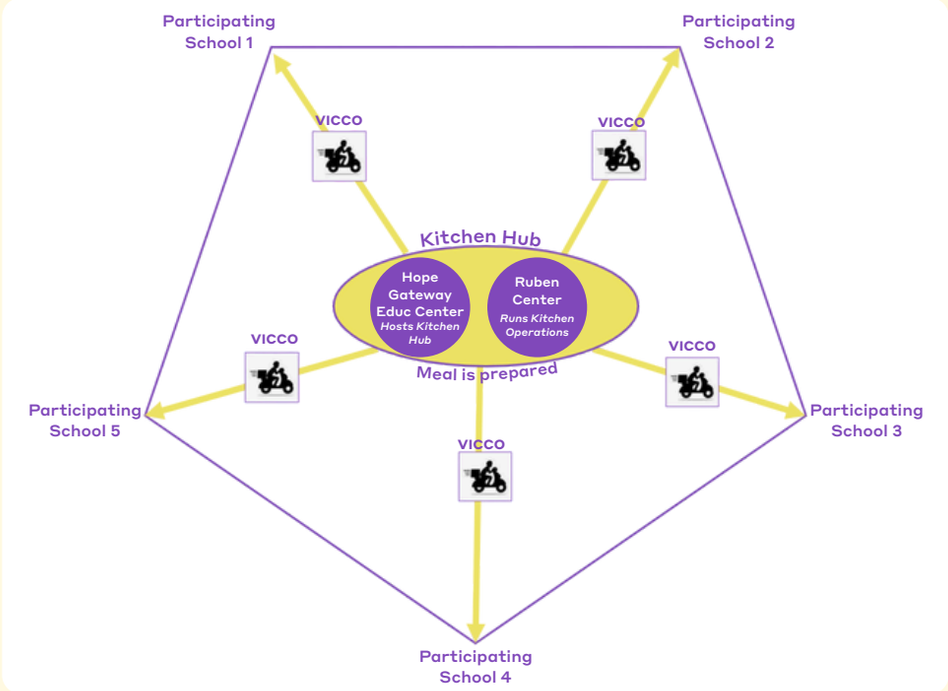
Background and rationale:

Mukuru, one of Nairobi's largest informal settlements, is home to over 300,000 residents (UC Berkeley et al., 2017). A 2023 survey by TMG Research and the Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT) revealed significant gaps in the implementation of effective school meal programmes. One of the main challenges is the limited coverage and capacity of existing state-run public schools. Mukuru has only five public schools serving about 10,000 pupils, forcing more than 27,000 children to rely on low-cost (approximately €20 per term, per child) community-run complementary schools. The government's school meal programme—Dishi na County, implemented by Nairobi City County—targets children in public schools only, excluding those in complementary schools. Yet these schools lack the infrastructure and institutional capacity to run effective school meal programmes of their own.

What we did:

Based on our two comprehensive surveys on school meal programmes in Mukuru, TMG partnered with the Viwandani Comprehensive Community Organization (VICCO) and the Ruben Centre to engage six complementary schools in co-designing an alternative school meal model, using a cluster approach. Discussions centred around institutional arrangements, menu options, and pricing, as well as the allocation of roles and responsibilities. Together, we tested key elements of school meal programmes, from financing and food sourcing to preparation and distribution. Based on a meal price of KES 30 (€0.203), a progressive payment model was piloted over five months—starting with one month of free meals, followed by incremental monthly increases of 25 per cent until 100 per cent of the cost was met by parents. The subsidy during this period was provided by TMG. Through interactive workshops, we considered the necessary elements to strengthen the financial and institutional sustainability of the programme.

Organization of the cluster model



Results and impact:

At the start of phase one, parents collaboratively developed a weekly menu that addressed their concerns about school meals. Willingness to pay was tested through a progressive payment model. The final meal cost was set at KES 25 (€0.169), which was informed by parent contribution rates over the pilot period, food-sourcing and preparation-cost data, and extensive consultations with both parents and school administrators.

Towards the end of phase one, a partnership among the six schools and the two local organizations (VICCO and the Ruben Centre) led to the establishment of the Viwandani Community School Meal Programme, which now provides meals to over 1,000 children. Oversight is provided by a management committee consisting of school administrators, parent representatives, and the two local organizations. This step was crucial for fostering local ownership and accountability for the programme. VICCO serves as the committee's secretariat and is responsible for daily operations. As a locally rooted community-based organization, VICCO provides critical coordination across participating complementary schools, ensuring the programme's smooth operation. The Ruben Centre contributes to the programme through stakeholder engagement, drawing on its expansive experience in this area.

Phase two serves to consolidate the achievements of phase one by strengthening oversight and operational structures. The school meal programme committee has developed protocols to guide progress during this phase.

Lessons for the future:

School meal programmes are arguably one of the most extensive and far-reaching social protection interventions. Especially in the context of food insecurity, they provide essential support to children, contribute to a conducive learning environment, and enhance learning outcomes. Additionally, these programmes promote child growth and development, which ultimately shape the future ability, well-being, and productivity of children (Bundy et al., 2024). Our work demonstrates the potential of alternative, community-led school meal models that are more sustainable, efficient, and equitable. Strong community involvement and ownership are central to the long-term sustainability of such programmes.

Learners enjoying lunch at dynamic in Mukuru, Nairobi. VICCO, 2025

SOCIAL INNOVATION 2. From crisis to care: Lessons from community kitchens in Cape Town, South Africa

Background and rationale:

This co-research project between TMG Research and the Food Agency Cape Town (FACT), which explores the role of community kitchens in Cape Town, began after the COVID-19 crisis. This global emergency compounded existing local challenges such as gender-based violence—which is closely linked to food insecurity—high unemployment rates, and rising food prices (Paganini & Weigelt, 2023). Community kitchens emerged as a grassroots community response to the hunger crisis, initially providing one meal per day. Gradually, they evolved into care spaces —especially for women and children—and became hubs for community action in the fight against gender-based violence and mobilization around the right to food. However, emergency funding dwindled, and, as the crisis subsided, many kitchens closed their doors, while those that remained struggled to meet growing demand.

What we did:

TMG and FACT partnered with a network of seven community kitchens to co-develop and test several innovative models designed to enhance the long-term sustainability of these initiatives, moving beyond viewing the kitchens as merely a coping strategy. We tested these models in two six-month iterations, exploring how the community kitchens could become more resilient and where they could be positioned within broader support systems.

Community kitchen in Bridgetown, Cape Town. FACT, 2024

Results and impact:

Here, we highlight two of the models tested: one focusing on internal action and the other on external action. In the first model, the kitchens established a *stokvel* (a savings scheme), whereby members contributed a nominal amount each month to a savings pot, with some kitchen heads subsidizing others to ensure monthly targets were met. At the end of the testing phase, the kitchen network secured matching grants, increasing stokvel reserves. This model fostered a strong sense of agency and ownership among the kitchen heads as they developed a shared vision of what the stokvel could achieve. In addition, participation improved the kitchen heads' financial literacy and communication skills while building financial capital through pooled resources, thereby improving their ability to respond to emergencies and increasing their buying power for ingredients.

The second model demonstrates how these initiatives can effectively respond to community needs and be bolstered by linking with existing government programmes. Some kitchens that were already providing childcare officially registered as Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres. These centres (also referred to as early learning programmes) provide essential services and care for children, from birth to the age of six, in low-income areas, where many parents cannot afford to pay fees. Many families rely on ECD Centres for both food and cognitive development for their children. One kitchen secured government funding for their ECD Centre, which, in turn, helped sustain other kitchens' operations.

Lessons for the future:

The community kitchens in Cape Town underscore how multiple crises can intersect at the community level and how grassroots initiatives emerge to serve as informal safety nets. Our research shows potential entry points for the state or other stakeholders, through scaling and amplifying collective community action, to build more resilient communities and more equitable food systems.

KEY MESSAGE 3. Trading to Eat: Informal food vending is a lifeline for urban livelihoods and essential for feeding cities in the Global South.

Across the African continent, informal vendors are crucial to food distribution. Around 70 per cent of urban households purchase food from informal markets, including street vendors and kiosks (CGIAR, 2024). Informal channels account for 40 to 90 per cent of total food sales in most sub-Saharan African countries, excluding South Africa (Euromonitor International, 2022). This broad range reflects differences between nations—while a few have more formal retail units, informal markets are the dominant mode of food access in most countries.

According to (FAO et al. 2021), poverty and inequality are the fundamental structural drivers behind all forms of food insecurity and malnutrition. Urban poverty is complex—beyond low and variable incomes, multiple aspects of deprivation must also be considered. They include poor quality and overcrowded housing, inadequate water supply and sanitation, and limited access to basic services such as healthcare and childcare. Further entrenching vulnerability are high prices for necessities such as food, voicelessness within local political and bureaucratic structures, and "limited or no safety nets for those with inadequate incomes" (Satterthwaite & Mitlin, 2013, p. 1).

Urban food insecurity arises from a combination of no or low income, unemployment, rising food prices, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to affordable, nutritious food (Haysom et al., 2022). Rapid urbanization has often outpaced the development of food distribution systems, leaving many poor, urban residents reliant on informal markets (OECD et al., 2025). In low- and middle-income countries, a significant proportion of urban residents live in informal settlements, with inconsistent food availability and nutritionally inadequate diets (FAO et al., 2024). Global shocks such as climate change and economic crises worsen these issues.

Millions of urban dwellers—especially in the Global South—face moderate to severe food insecurity, with women and marginalized groups disproportionately affected (FAO et al., 2024). Hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition are widespread in Kenya: 72.8 per cent of the population is food insecure (FAO et al., 2024), and, in 2018, 58 per cent of households in 23 sampled areas of Nairobi were found to be food insecure (Owuor, 2018). These figures are even more severe in informal settlements, where over 80 per cent of households face food insecurity (Kimani-Murage et al., 2023). Vulnerability is particularly high among certain low-income groups, including orphans and vulnerable children, those with low levels of education, women (especially single household heads), older people, migrants, and those in precarious employment (Owuor et al., 2017).

Informal food vending is central to urban food supply in Kenya, especially for food-insecure residents of informal settlements. Informal vendors serve as the main distributors and retailers of farm produce for the majority of consumers across all income levels (Tschirley et al., 2010), but they are especially critical for low-income households in informal settlements. For these households, informal vendors are the main source of fruit, vegetables, animal products, cooked food, and cereals, as formal markets are often too distant or unaffordable. Our research shows that households in informal settlements buy over 95 per cent of their food from informal vendors, without whom they would have extremely limited food access (Owuor, 2020). A TMG/AMT survey using a food basket method found food from informal vendors to be about 13 per cent cheaper than that from formal retailers. Wegerif (2024) reported similar findings in South Africa during the COVID-19 crisis, when informal vendors sold fresh produce at lower prices than formal sellers.

In times of crisis, informal food vendors play a key role in maintaining food access. During food shortages and other crises, informal food vendors sell food on credit, tailor offerings to their communities' purchasing power and preferences, and increase food accessibility for the most vulnerable by selling in smaller, more affordable quantities.

Beyond distributing food, informal vendors also clean streets, enhance safety, and create more jobs, employing community members as porters, security guards, transport operators, and storage providers (WIEGO, 2024).

In Mukuru, food vending offers not only a critical food access point but also a vital livelihood strategy for many people. Our research shows that, in Mukuru, informal vendors—most of whom are women—are typically around 39 years old, have obtained at least secondary education, have been in business for about eight years, and are members of a chama (traditional savings group). Their average monthly income is KES 17,120 (approximately €125 at today's rates), and, for 70 per cent of them, it is the household's sole income source, supporting an average household size of three.

In Kenya, women are more likely than men to work in informal food vending, comprising between 60 and 82 per cent of food traders depending on the products and location (Indimuli, 2021; KNBS, 2016; Sverdlik, 2016). Our research found that 75 per cent of informal food vendors in Mukuru are women. In Nairobi more broadly, selling fruit, vegetables, and cooked food—the top-selling items—is the most common income source for low-income women (Paganini & Weigelt, 2023).

Informal food vendors are and will remain indispensable to food systems across the Global South. They bridge critical gaps left by formal retailers, ensuring food access for even the most vulnerable groups. As urbanization accelerates, recognizing the informal market's key role in food security will become ever more vital.

SOCIAL INNOVATION 3: Strengthening informal food vendors by establishing food vendor associations in Mukuru informal settlement, Nairobi

Background and rationale:

For many households in informal settlements and beyond, informal food selling is both a main source of livelihood and an essential means of food access. Despite the vital role played by informal food vendors, policies and legal frameworks in Kenya adopt an ambiguous or even contradictory approach towards them, swinging between support and harassment (Racaud et al., 2018). Informal food vendors often lack representation in policy processes and are left without a voice. Our research in Nairobi and Cape Town has identified the lack of strong sectoral organizations and highlighted the need to invest in such structures for informal traders as a key means of addressing the challenges they face. Associations of informal actors (e.g. vendors, caregivers, and growers) can serve as self-governed institutions, setting standards, resolving conflicts, and acting as intermediaries with formal authorities. These associations can also support the delivery of government programmes and priorities such as food safety (Riisgaard et al., 2024; Vorley, 2023)

What we did:

As part of the four-year (2022–2025) participatory action research Trading to Eat project, TMG Research, collaborating with local partners AMT and the Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT), worked closely with food vendors in Mukuru to support the formation of food vendor associations.

This involved lobbying for official recognition from Nairobi City County and other stakeholders, as well as organizing public forums and dialogue sessions with various county departments. Through a train-the-trainer model, TMG and AMT supported vendors in developing their organizational and business skills. Capacity-building workshops included training in digital bookkeeping, bulk purchasing, networking, and legal frameworks and policies that improved their ability to advocate for their rights. In addition, a food-price survey analysed the role informal vendors play in ensuring food access for low-income urban households.

Engagement dialogue of Mukuru Food Vendor Association. AMT, 2025

Results and impact:

Today, Mukuru's food vendors are organized into three associations, bringing together many chamas and over 200 active members. The impact of these self-organized groups is already visible: securing loans, improving the efficiency of procurement, jointly purchasing equipment, and partnering with a social housing project in Nakuru. They have also collaborated with Food Banking Kenya to deliver food donations to over 2,000 vulnerable households—including those with no income, single parents, older people, and youth. When floods hit Nairobi in 2024, the associations played a vital role in helping vendors rebuild their businesses. Through internal lending, they provided recovery loans, and extended repayment periods to ease financial pressure and support recovery.

Lessons for the future:

Informal food vendors are key actors in delivering affordable and safe food to vulnerable groups in Nairobi. Their associations are a powerful entry point for Nairobi City County to advance its priorities, such as food safety. Building and strengthening these associations is key to amplify their voice in policymaking processes and to leverage their potential as a partner of governments in achieving their food- and nutrition-related objectives.

SOCIAL INNOVATION 4. Serving more than food: The untapped potential of women-run eateries in the informal settlement of Mathare, Nairobi

Background and rationale:

Eateries, often operated by local women, provide affordable, ready-made meals that the majority of residents in Nairobi's informal settlements rely on for daily nourishment. Despite their vital role, their contributions remain largely unacknowledged by government institutions. TMG Research partnered with Shibuye Community Health Workers to study women-run community eateries in Mathare, seeking to understand their role in urban food systems and highlight their contributions through action research. Mathare, one of the largest informal settlements in Nairobi, is located within Mathare Sub-county. The settlement, which covers an area of approximately three square kilometres, had 206,564 residents in 2019—resulting in a population density of 68,941 people per square kilometre (KNBS, 2019).

What we did:

Through participatory action research, we explored the role of eateries in urban food systems under the impact of the global polycrisis and local challenges, including gender-based violence, high food prices, eviction risks, climate-change effects such as flooding, and civil unrest. Our research documented the contributions and challenges of eatery owners, encouraged dialogue and self-advocacy, and supported owners to engage in policymaking processes.

Meal at an eatery in an informal settlement in Nairobi. Elias Waliaula, 2025

Results and impact:

Many eateries in Mathare are located within walking distance of homes and workplaces, making them easily accessible and convenient for community members. As a result, more than 60 per cent of surveyed customers reported eating at these venues at least once a day, while nearly 40 per cent reported doing so two or more times daily.

Importantly, many eateries are run by women, providing vital income opportunities in settings where formal employment is scarce. For all the women eatery owners involved in our research, their businesses were their primary source of income, highlighting the significant contribution of these eateries to women's financial independence.

Beyond ownership, eateries also create employment opportunities across informal food supply chains, offering localized, low-barrier pathways to work, especially for women and youth. Jobs range from food preparation and ingredient sourcing to cleaning, delivery, and waste management. Most of this work is in the informal sector, which, while unregulated, is essential for daily life and the local economy. The availability of precooked food also reduces the burden of unpaid care work, especially for women responsible for food preparation in their households. This frees up time for income-generating activities, rest, or community engagement, further contributing to the local economy and women's well-being.

Our research revealed that the eateries also function as informal social protection systems. During the COVID-19 emergency and the ongoing food-price crisis, operators often offered meals on credit or for free—supporting vulnerable community members such as pregnant women, people living with disabilities or chronic illnesses, individuals struggling with substance use, orphans, older people, and children in difficult street situations.

Despite their vital contributions, eatery operators face legal uncertainty and infrastructural neglect. They lack formal recognition, often operate in inadequate sanitary conditions, and are vulnerable to eviction. Yet all eatery owners involved in our research expressed a willingness to comply with health regulations if they are provided with enabling policy frameworks, financial support, training opportunities, and adequate infrastructure.

Lessons for the future:

Community eateries are not just temporary coping mechanisms but also essential components of daily life in informal settlements like Mathare. They foster community resilience, provide basic forms of informal social protection, and support food security in low-income urban settings. Future efforts should focus on formally recognizing eateries, improving public health infrastructure, and providing financial and training support. Integrating eatery operators into food security policies, strengthening their collective voice, and involving them in policymaking processes will help build more inclusive and resilient urban environments.

Women preparing food in Mukuru, Nairobi. AMT, 2023

KEY MESSAGE 4. Regulations should serve as guard rails—shaping a more inclusive and enabling environment for informal actors—not as roadblocks that deepen exclusion and inequality.

Debates on informality have often been structured along dichotomous lines—formal–informal, regular–irregular, or legal–illegal—whereby government and the law are equated with formality (Smart & Koster, 2024). Within this framing, economic activities that do not fully comply with relevant laws and regulations—whether concerning business registration, licensing, or fulfilling tax obligations—are labelled as illegal (WIEGO, 2015), non-compliant, irregular, inefficient, and ultimately undesirable. In response, most governments adopt an inflexible approach, prioritizing regulation enforcement over the holistic integration of informal actors into a more productive and sustainable economy that recognizes their contributions and provides them with opportunities for growth and development (ILO, 2018b). This approach is often manifested in rigid regulatory frameworks with which informal actors are unable to comply due to resource and institutional capacity constraints (World Bank, 2019). A critical evaluation of this approach reveals its shortcomings: rather than promoting compliance or ensuring safety and quality, it can exacerbate existing conditions for those working in the informal economy by pushing their activities further underground, leading to increased vulnerability and reduced compliance (Oviedo et al., 2009).

With the drive towards formalization as the presumed path to compliance, the importance of supporting informal actors in their current state is often overlooked. This oversight creates unnecessary tension between informal actors and the formalization processes intended to enhance their operations, compliance levels, and inclusion (IEJ, 2018). ILO Recommendation No. 204 requires governments to invest in the support of informal actors, including by ensuring access to universal social protection for informal workers as a prerequisite for taking steps towards formalization (ILO, 2015). The Recommendation also emphasizes the need to preserve and improve existing livelihoods throughout the transition process. These principles align with SDG 8—Decent Work and Economic Growth—which promotes sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

Food systems present a clear case for overcoming regulatory deadlock, particularly in contexts where compliance is low and actors feel constrained. Food safety regulations designed to protect consumers may inadvertently exclude informal vendors who lack the means to meet formal standards (Hoffmann et al., 2023). The general principles of food hygiene under the Codex Alimentarius, particularly CXC 1-1969 (FAO & WHO, 2022), highlight the significant challenges faced by small, informal food business operators due to the ambiguous nature of global food safety regulations. Notably, the requirement that food business premises be situated away from polluted and unsanitary environments (FAO & WHO, 2022) presents a considerable challenge for eatery operators in most informal settlements.

Mathare, one of Kenya's most densely populated informal settlements, provides a striking example. The settlement lacks a sewage system, posing the risk of human waste frequently draining into streets and walkways (Corburn & Hildebrand, 2015). In such settings, compliance with global hygiene standards becomes a near-impossible task. Moreover, these regulations impose strict requirements for food-business design, access to potable water, and comprehensive training in Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point management. For informal vendors operating from temporary stalls—often without essential market infrastructure or access to clean water—compliance with these regulations becomes an impractical challenge.

To transform food systems in an equitable and sustainable manner, regulations must be proactively reframed as essential safeguards rather than barriers. While the Codex Alimentarius general principles of food hygiene recognize that small businesses may face obstacles in effectively implementing these standards (FAO & WHO, 2022), they offer little guidance on how such businesses may be supported. This leaves informal operators vulnerable to the vagaries of local regulations and authorities.

Reducing the burden on informal businesses requires implementing flexible compliance measures, such as simplified licensing processes and tiered regulations. Targeted investment in capacity-building initiatives, including training programmes in food safety and quality standards, can empower informal food-business operators to meet compliance requirements while enhancing food safety. Additionally, actively engaging informal actors in policymaking ensures their voices are heard, leading to more practical and context-specific regulations (*ILO, 2025*). Together, these measures can help resolve long-standing challenges, fostering an environment in which compliance is attainable and informal food businesses can thrive—ultimately creating more equitable and sustainable food systems.

Vendor in Mukuru Kwa Njenga. AMT, 2024

KEY MESSAGE 5. Working with informality unlocks innovative, community-led solutions to food insecurity and drives progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Informality presents opportunities for social innovations that contribute to food security. Social innovations are novel approaches to addressing social needs and are frequently developed collaboratively with the involvement of diverse stakeholders. These innovations often align with the capabilities and priorities of local communities, making them scalable and contextually relevant. Actors operating in informality are frequently compelled to adapt, driven by the pressure to respond to rapidly changing circumstances.

In our partnerships with community-based organizations in informal settlements and low-income urban areas, we observed a strong willingness to transform daily routines into collaborative processes of social innovation. Consequently, we co-developed a model that complements the official school meal programme and reaches community-run, complementary (i.e. informal) schools in Mukuru, Nairobi. In the Cape Flats of Cape Town, we collaborated with community kitchens to identify viable strategies for achieving financial sustainability. Social innovations help localize aid and offer cost-effective solutions in times of reduced international-cooperation budgets. These examples demonstrate how working with informality can unlock new pathways for developing adaptable and community-driven social innovations that can be scaled in other contexts.

Collaboration with the informal sector contributes to addressing critical data gaps. The United Nations Secretary-General's Report on the Sustainable Development Goals (2024, p. 5) emphasizes the importance of "engaging citizens in data production" to ensure inclusivity and prevent the exclusion of marginalized populations. Accessible digital tools are crucial in this endeavour. Our collaborative efforts with residents of low-income urban neighbourhoods have yielded locally generated data on the household food

Self-organization is crucial for empowering informal actors to collaborate with governments and development organizations. Support for such self-organization, therefore, constitutes a catalytic investment. Informal settlements are typically characterized by a limited or selective state presence. Inhabitants face the constant threat of eviction due to occupying land they do not formally own. Under these conditions, eviction becomes one of the few significant indicators of the state's presence. Conversely, in terms of service delivery, governments often fail to uphold their responsibilities to invest in essential infrastructure such as sewage systems, access to clean water, and electricity.

Frequently operating within constrained fiscal spaces, governments must meet the demands of achieving food security and providing decent living conditions in informal settlements while adhering to strict budgetary boundaries. Innovative service-delivery models are therefore imperative. Research indicates that these models are most successful when both top-down and bottom-up approaches are simultaneously adopted: the state decentralizes service delivery (top-down) while community-based initiatives self-organize and professionalize (bottom-up) to become credible service-delivery partners (Rauch et al., 2001). Neither approach alone is sufficient. For instance, collaboration with associations of informal food vendors in Nairobi City County could demonstrate how joint implementation can massively reduce the transaction costs of enforcing food safety standards. Working with informality entails enabling and investing in the self-organization of informal actors operating in the field.

A proactive approach to the informal sector is crucial for advancing gender equality and securing women's rights. Due to lower entry barriers, women are disproportionately represented in informal work. At the same time, they shoulder the primary burden of unpaid care responsibilities, often under the challenging conditions of informal settlements and low-income urban neighbourhoods. Women's self-organization strengthens their position within communities and enables broader participation in relevant decision-making processes, both at the community level and in formal spaces. It is also a crucial pathway to recognizing and valuing women's contributions to informal systems of social protection. Working with informality thus becomes a key strategy for progressively realizing women's rights.

Working with informality must become a strategic priority for international cooperation aimed at achieving food and nutrition security, transforming food systems, and building resilient communities. This report presents evidence highlighting the informal sector's indispensable role in ensuring food access for urban populations and in achieving broader sustainable development outcomes. It also demonstrates that informal actors can be powerful agents of social innovation if provided with the necessary resources. Yet rigid regulations and contradictory policy approaches undermine their potential while further marginalizing people already living in fragile and vulnerable environments.

Rapid urbanization across the African continent, combined with limited formal employment opportunities and ongoing demographic shifts—such as the projection that the young population on the African continent will grow by over 40 per cent by 2030—adds urgency to this issue (UNDP, 2023). As a growing proportion of global youth depends on the informal economy, so too will progress towards the SDGs. Targeted investments and collaboration to progressively strengthen informal actors are therefore essential for an expanding segment of the population. Without such support, informal social protection systems will remain fragmented and social innovations will struggle to upscale. **To overcome setbacks and stagnation in progress towards achieving the SDGs, international cooperation must prioritize working with informality—a key strategic lever for achieving Zero Hunger.**

A street in Mukuru showing informal settlement, Nairobi. APSID, 2022

TMG Research's participatory action research in Cape Town, South Africa and Nairobi, Kenya

In Cape Town, our research—conducted with our local partner FACT—focused on the Cape Flats area. Its two main components were co-research with seven community kitchens (the kitchen network) and a household survey measuring food insecurity. This research was underpinned by a feminist approach emphasizing co-creation, acknowledgement of diverse forms of knowledge, and prioritization of reciprocity, thus ensuring that the results would benefit both researchers and communities. Methods included focus group discussions, food dialogues, photovoice, household surveys, and storytelling.

As the COVID-19 crisis subsided and emergency funding declined, TMG and the kitchen network began to co-develop and test models over two six-month phases, aiming to sustain kitchen activities, strengthen the network, and build community cohesion. The household survey was conducted in two rounds—the first in 2023 consisting of 2,165 households and the second in 2024 involving 2,135 households—across six different research sites: Bridgetown, Hanover Park, Mitchell's Plain, Gugulethu, Mfuleni, and the Cape Winelands (comprising Klapmuts and Elsenburg).

In Nairobi, we worked in the informal settlements of Mukuru and Mathare. In Mukuru, together with our partners AMT and KENASVIT, we supported informal food vendors in establishing vendor associations through various methods—such as focus group discussions—to identify key sector challenges. Capacity-building in business management and policy advocacy—core to the intervention—used a train-the-trainer model. The creation of platforms for advocacy and engagement, such as exchange visits, facilitated learning and knowledge-sharing. Another part of our action research focused on the food vendor associations' impact on members and on food price trends and patterns. By May 2025, one food vendor association had become established and two more were in the final stages of registration, collectively representing over 200 active members.

Also in Mukuru, we worked with AMT to understand the challenges facing school meal programmes by surveying complementary schools—community-run, basic-education schools established to fill the gap left by insufficient public education. In collaboration with two locally based partners, VICCO and the Ruben Centre, we piloted an alternative approach to providing school meals in six schools, using a cluster model. Food was prepared in one school—the kitchen hub—and distributed to five others that lacked functioning school meal programmes. Monthly meetings with local partners, school administrators, and parent representatives helped monitor progress and collect feedback. The ongoing second phase focuses on strengthening institutions responsible for oversight and operations through interactive workshops guiding protocol development and the establishment of a revolving fund to mitigate the potential impact of delays in parental payments.

In Mathare, together with our local partner Shibuye Community Health Workers, we sought to understand the roles, lived experiences, challenges, and needs of women-run community eateries in the context of food security. We conducted interviews with operators of 10 eateries, as well as focus group discussions with surrounding community members. The next phase will explore the role of eateries beyond food—as spaces for solidarity—through further interviews with eatery operators and their customers.

References

Battersby, J., & Watson, V. (Eds.). (2018). *Urban Food Systems Governance and Poverty in African Cities* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315191195

Bundy, D. A., Gentilini, U., Schultz, L., Bedasso, B., Singh, S., Okamura, Y., Iyengar, H. T., & Blakstad, M. M. (2024). *School meals, social protection, and human development: Revisiting trends, evidence, and practices in South Asia and beyond*. World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/41431

CGIAR. (2024). *First-ever guidelines to help African governments improve food safety in informal food markets to be developed*. News. https://www.cgiar.org/news-events/news/first-ever-guidelines-to-help-african-governments-improve-food-safety-in-informal-food-markets-to-be-developed

Corburn, J., & Hildebrand, C. (2015). Slum sanitation and the social determinants of women's health in Nairobi, Kenya. *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*, 2015, 209505. https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/209505

Euromonitor International. (2022). *Why informal retailers in Africa cannot be ignored*. https://www.euromonitor.com/article/why-informal-retailers-in-africa-cannot-be-ignored

FAO. (2007). Spotlight: *School children, street food and micronutrient deficiencies in Tanzania*. https://web.archive.org/web/20150409051923/http://www.fao.org/AG/magazine/0702sp1.htm

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, & WHO. (2021). *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all*. FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/CB4474EN

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, & WHO. (2024). *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024*. FAO; IFAD; UNICEF; WFP; WHO; https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1254en

FAO, & WHO. (2022). *International food standards: General principles of food hygiene*. https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/en/lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FStandards%252FCXC%2B1-1969%252FCXC_001e.pdf

Haysom, G., Battersby, J., Metelerkamp, L., Buthelezi, N., & Weru, J. (2022). *Urban Food Systems Governance—Engaging urban food governance in inclusive and transparent ways, enhancing and valorizing agency and developing methods for co-produced food sensitive planning.* TMG Research gGmbH.

Hoffmann, V., Alonso, S., & Kang'ethe, E. (2023). Food safety in Kenya: Status, challenges, and proposed solutions. In C. Breisinger, M. Keenan, J. Mbuthia, & J. Njuki (Eds.), *Food systems transformation in Kenya: Lessons from the past and policy options for the future* (pp. 105–129). International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). https://doi.org/10.2499/9780896294561_05

IEJ. (2018). *Informal economy/sector* (Stream 3, Policy Brief 1; Job Summit: Policy Brief Series). Institute for Economic Justice. https://iej.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Stream-3-Policy-Brief-1-Informal-Economy-Sector.pdf

ILO. (2015). R204—*Transition from the informal to the formal economy recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)*. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R204

ILO. (2018a). More than 60 per cent of the world's employed population are in the informal economy. *Newsroom*. https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/more-60-cent-world%E2%80%99s-employed-population-are-informal-economy

ILO. (2018b). *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture (third edition)*. International Labour Office. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/Women_men_informal_economy_statistical_picture.pdf

ILO. (2023a). *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical update*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@travail/documents/publication/wcms_869188.pdf

ILO. (2023b). *World employment and social outlook: Trends 2023* (ILO Flagship Report). International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40inst/documents/publication/wcms_865332.pdf

ILO. (2024). *World social protection report 2024-26: Universal social protection for climate action and a just transition* (1st ed.). ILO. https://doi.org/10.54394/ZMDK5543

ILO. (2025). *Innovative approaches to addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work International Labour Conference 113th Session, 2025* (ILC.113/Report VI). ISBN 978-92-2-041516-0 (web PDF)

ILOSTAT. (2025). *Statistics on the informal economy*. https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/informality/

IMF. (2021). Five things to know about the informal economy. *IMF Country Focus*. https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2021/07/28/na-072821-five-things-to-know-about-the-informal-economy.

IMF. (2024). The clock is ticking on sub-Saharan Africa's urgent job creation challenge. *Chart of the Week*. https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2024/11/12/the-clock-is-ticking-on-sub-saharan-africas-urgent-job-creation-challenge

Indimuli, R. (2021). Access to social protection in Kenya: The role of micro-traders' associations. In L. Riisgaard, W. Mitullah, & N. Torm (Eds.), *Social Protection and Informal Workers in Sub-Saharan Africa* (pp. 147–171). Taylor & Francis.
Kimani-Murage, E., Gitagia, M., Osogo, D., Mutoro, A., Paganini, N., Gitagia, E., & Osogo, M. (2023). *A Human Rights-Based Approach to Food Security in Kenya and South Africa*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.15480.32003/1

KNBS. (2016). Micro, small and medium establishment (MSME) survey: Basic report. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. https://www.knbs.or.ke/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2016-Micro-Small-and-Medium-Enterprises-Basic-Report.pdf

KNBS. (2019). 2019 Kenya population and housing census results. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. https://www.knbs.or.ke/2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-results/

Mumtaz, Z. (2021). Informal social protection: A conceptual synthesis. *Social Policy & Administration*, *56*(3), 394–408. https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12772

Mumtaz, Z., Enworo, O. C., & Mokomane, Z. (2024). A case for the inclusion of informal social protection in social policy theory and practice: Lessons from Nigeria and Pakistan. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 00219096241249975. https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096241249975

References

OECD. (2025). States of fragility 2025. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/81982370-en

OECD, African Development Bank, Cities Alliance, & United Cities And Local Governments Of Africa. (2025). Africa's Urbanisation Dynamics 2025: Planning for Urban Expansion (West African Studies). OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/2a47845c-en

Oviedo, A. M., Thomas, M. R., & Karakurum-Özdemir, K. (2009). Economic informality causes, costs, and policies—A literature survey. World Bank. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/567571468331805356/pdf/503600PUB0Box3101OFFICIAL0USE0ONLY1.pdf

Owuor, S. (2018). *The state of household food security in Nairobi, Kenya* (11; Hungry Cities Report). Hungry Cities Partnership.

Owuor, S. (2020). *Inclusive Growth and Informal Food Vending in Nairobi, Kenya.* (20; Hungry Cities Partnership, p. 44).

Owuor, S., Brown, A., Frayne, B., & Wagner, J. (2017). *The Urban Food System of Nairobi, Kenya* (6; Hungry Cities Partnership, p. 79).

Paganini, N., & Weigelt, J. (2023). *Pathways to transform urban food systems: Progressively realising the Right to Food through a strengthen informal sector in Cape Town and Nairobi*. TMG Research gGmbH. https://doi.org//10.13140/RG.2.2.23410.17602/1

Racaud, S., Kago, J., & Owuor, S. (2018). Introduction: Contested Street: Informal Street Vending and its Contradictions. *Articulo – Revue de Sciences Humaines*, *17–18*. https://doi.org/10.4000/articulo.3719

Rauch, T., Bartels, M., & Engel, A. (2001). Regional Rural Development. A regional response to rural poverty (Schriftenreihe Der GTZ, Nr. 274). GTZ.

Riisgaard, L., Torm, N., Kinyondo, G., Mitullah, W., Kamau, A., Gervas, A., & Indimuli, R. (2024). Challenging the formality bias: The organization of informal work, working relations, and collective agency in Kenya and Tanzania. *Development Policy Review*, *42*(1), e12729. https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12729

Ritchie, H., Samborska, V., & Roser, M. (2024). *Urbanization: The world population is moving to cities*. Our World in Data. https://ourworldindata.org/urbanization

Satterthwaite, D., & Mitlin, D. (2013). *Reducing urban poverty in the Global South*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203104330

Smart, A., & Koster, M. (2024). Beyond formal-informal dichotomies. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190854584.013.350

Stavropoulou, M., Holmes, R., & Jones, N. (2017). Harnessing informal institutions to strengthen social protection for the rural poor. *Global Food Security*, *12*, 73–79. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2016.08.005

Sverdlik, A. (2016, January). Nourishing livelihoods: The food vendors sustaining Nairobi's slums. *IIED*. https://www.iied.org/nourishing-livelihoods-food-vendors-sustaining-nairobis-slums

Tandrayen, V., & Kasseeah, H. (2018). (PDF) Informal social protection: A case study of a small island economy. *International Journal of Public Policy*, *14*(5/6). https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPP.2018.096671

Tschirley, D., Ayieko, M., Hichaambwa, M., Goeb, J., & Loescher, W. (2010). *Modernizing Africa's fresh produce supply chains without rapid supermarket takeover: Towards a definition of research and investment priorities* (93030; Food Security International Development Working Papers). Michigan State University, Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics.
UC Berkeley, University of Nairobi, Muungano Wa Wanavijiji, Slum Dwellers International, Akiba Mashinani Trust, Strathmore University, & Katiba Institute. (2017). *Mukuru Situational Analysis 2017*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58d4504db8a79b27eb388c91/t/5a65fbd653450a34f4104e69/1516633087045/Mukuru+SPA+Situational+Analysis+2017+Phase+2.pdf

UNDP. (2021). *Informality and social protection in African countries: A forward-looking assessment of contributory schemes*. https://www.undp.org/africa/publications/informality-and-social-protection-african-countries-forward-looking-assessment-contributory-schemes

UNDP. (2023). *Youth in Africa: A demographic imperative for peace and security Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes and the Sahel*. United Nations Development Programme. https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-05/undp-africa-youth-in-africa-2023-EN.pdf

United Nations. (2024). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2024.pdf

Vorley, B. (2023). *Working with informality: Constructive ways to transform food systems.* IIED and SNV.
Wegerif, M. C. A. (2024). Street traders' contribution to food security: Lessons from fresh produce traders' experiences in South Africa during Covid-19. *Food Security*, *16*(1), 115–131. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-023-01409-w

WIEGO. (2015). *Informality and illegality: Unpacking the relationship*. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. https://www.wiego.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/WIEGO-Informality-and-Illegality.pdf

WIEGO. (2024). *Street vendors and market traders*. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. https://www.wiego.org/street-vendors-and-market-traders

World Bank. (2019). *Doing business 2019: Training for reform* (16th Edition; p. 311). https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/media/Annual-Reports/English/DB2019-report_web-version.pdf

Yonzan, N., Mahler, D. G., & Lakner, C. (2023). Poverty is back to pre-COVID levels globally, but not for low-income countries. *World Bank Blog*. https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/poverty-back-pre-covid-levels-globally-not-low-income-countries#:~:text=Using%20this%20approach%2C%20we%20find,the%20start%20of%20the%20pandemic

Who we are

TMG Research is dedicated to driving just and sustainable transitions through action research and advocacy. Committed to a rights-based approach, our programmes focus on responsible land governance, food systems transformation in rural and urban settings, and adaptation to climate change.

At TMG, science with society is more than a principle; it's how we work to ensure equitable pathways to sustainable development. We explore how local innovations and global policies intersect to drive systemic change, ensuring that international frameworks are both inspired by and responsive to community-led transformations. Our research projects and advocacy are co-developed with civil society, policymakers, scientists and the private sector to ensure international sustainability efforts are informed by emergent innovations and forge real-world solutions.

TMG is headquartered in Berlin, with a team in Nairobi. Our research focuses primarily on the European Union and Africa, including Benin, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi and South Africa.

Authors

Emmanuel Atamba, Christian Sonntag, Thembeka Sikobi, Serah Kiragu-Wissler, William Onura, Lumi Youm, Daniel Montas and Jes Weigelt.

Designed by: Elias Waliaula

This publication was made possible with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

(TMG)
ThinkTankforSustainability
Töpfer Müller Gaßner

TMG Research

TMG – Think Tank for Sustainability
TMG Research gGmbH
EUREF-Campus 6–9 10829 Berlin,
Germany
Phone: +49 30 921 074 0700
Email: info@tmg-thinktank.com
Website: www.tmg-thinktank.com

Scan the QR code to explore our webpage on this initiative.

Supported by

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development