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## Women participation in urban street vending: a balancing act between productive and reproductive roles in Harare, Zimbabwe

In the past three decades, street vending has become a prominent feature of developing economies. However, this activity remains largely on the fringes of national economic development and therefore poorly understood. The main objective of this paper was to determine the diversity of goods and services sold by street vendors in Harare and its environs in Zimbabwe. The research also delved into how the choice of street vendor activities was affected by gender and access to resources. The analysis also decomposed the labour profiles associated with specific businesses by female and male vendors. The analysis was guided by the Moser Gender Analysis Framework which focused on productive, reproductive, and community roles. The methodology was mainly anchored on the hotspot approach, which involved areas known to have high levels of street vendor activities. These geographical zones were clustered around major urban vegetable and commodities markets in and around Harare. Five main markets namely Mbare Musika, Chigovanyika, Katanga Norton, Hatcliff market (commonly referred to as Padust), and Chikwanha urban market. Thus, the first stage involved the purposive selection of urban markets in and around Harare. The researchers also defined a radius of 50km from the City of Harare because these markets contributed significantly to the diets of the consumers domiciled in Harare. The second stage involved the identification of street vendors to be included in the survey. Thus, 229 female and 88 male street vendors were included in the final sample. Within-cluster snowball sampling was conducted in and around the confines of each market. The findings of the study revealed that a diversity of goods were sold by male and female vendors. Women were predominantly involved in the vegetable business where 37.1% indicated being involved in this activity. This was followed by fruits and vegetables (21.5%). Cooked food as a business activity emerged as the third most important business for female vendors (19.1%). On the other hand, the two most important business activities for male vendors were vegetables and processed consumer goods including chocolates, sweets, biscuits, flavored drinks, and in some cases cigarettes. By comparison, women spent more time cleaning the market across the three business activities compared to men. They also invested more time in bringing the goods to the market spending an average of 0.5 hours (30 minutes) compared to 15 minutes for men. This finding revealed that there was a gender burden as women had to balance between productive and reproductive roles in their families. Street vendors faced numerous challenges ranging from run-ins with the police, poor access to water, and toilets, and lack of proper working spaces. In addition, there were too many street vendors operating for the available space. This haphazard arrangement had the potential to create a health hazard, especially against the backdrop of a cholera outbreak that plagued the country in the last two years. A nested policy approach is suggested as a sustainable long-term strategy for integrating street vendor operations into the formal mainstream economy. This approach involves awareness campaigns on formalizing street vending operations, training of operators, and the provision of strategic resources including finance. The success of this model hinges on multi-stakeholder participation.

Keywords: street vending, hotspot, Moser Gender Analysis, labour profile, Harare, Zimbabwe

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