

EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food

COVID-19 Traditional Market Report Brief

Abuja, Nigeria | December 2021 | Issue 4

The quarterly Traditional Market Report (TMR), developed by EatSafe, tracks behaviors and daily decisions made by vendors and consumers in two markets in Abuja, Nigeria (Utako and Gosa). In addition to summarizing perceptions on COVID-19 and the difficulties faced by market actors in these two traditional markets, the TMR reports on prices of selected nutritious foods every two weeks. The TMR report tracks several accepted indicators that help determine the resilience of market systems as market actors cope with business and food security choices under COVID-19 conditions. The TMR highlights three new surveys from July, August, and September 2021 conducted through phone interviews of a panel of vendors (n=30) and consumers (n=32). [Previous TMR issues are available online.](#)

Insights from vendor perspective between July and September 2021

- Share of vendors that reported that the number of customers in the last 30 days stayed about the same increased across the quarter: 37% Jul; 40% Aug; 47% Sep. Similarly, the share of vendors that had about the same number of suppliers in the last 30 days increased (67% Jul; 60% Aug; 80% Sep)
- Share of vendors that found it not very difficult or not difficult at all to follow new COVID-19 rules in the market increased significantly from 77% Jul/Aug to 87% Sep.
- Vendors started sharing more resources across the months, from sanitizers (80% Jul; 100% Aug; 86% Sep) and hand washing facilities only (50% Jul/Aug; 86% Sep) they included masks (20% Jul; 25% Aug; 71% Sep), transportation (10% Jul; 0% Aug; 86% Sep) and suppliers (0% Jul/Aug; 43% Sep) in September.
- The share of vendors that borrowed money due to COVID-19 decreased from 27% Jul to 20% Aug/Sep.

Insights from consumer perspective between July and September 2021

- The share of consumer households whose financial situation worsened compared to before COVID-19 decreased slightly between Jul-Sep (53% Jul; 50% Aug; 47% Sep).
- More than half of consumers (63% in July), 44% in August and 47% in September bought less or stopped buying foods. About one fourth bought more or new foods than the food they used to buy before the pandemic (28% Jul/Aug; 15% Sep). These changes affected grains, roots, tuber, plantain and were due to price changes.
- The share of consumers that reported doing most of their food shopping at the market was 62% Jul; 47% Aug and 53% Sep. Other places for shopping food were other open-air markets (66% Jul; 81% Aug; 56% Sep), supermarkets (19% Jul; 22% Aug/Sep) and small shops (9% Jul; 16% Aug; 19% Sep).
- The level of consumer loyalty increased slightly between Jul-Sep. About half of the consumers (47% Jul; 50% Aug; 53% Sep) bought usually or always from the vendors they know.

Food prices between April and September 2021

Food prices for all pulses (white, brown, and soya beans), eggs, beef and chicken increased between Apr-Sep (39%, 37%, 7%, 11%, 10%, and 6%). Prices for vegetables and fish remained (almost) unchanged (carrots/lettuce/fish: 0%; tomato: -3%).

I. BACKGROUND ON COVID-19 SITUATION

After Nigeria’s national COVID-19 weekly infection rate remained low during April and June, the rate increased in early July and August and fell again in September (**Fig. 1**).

Between January 3 and September 27, 2021, 204,201 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 2,724 deaths were reported by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control. While the average weekly infection rate in July and August was 3,013 and 2,661, respectively, the infection rate was 1,877 in September. Of Nigerian territories, Abuja had the second highest incidence of confirmed cases after Lagos.

In early March 2021, Nigeria received the first doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Over three million doses were administered in early July, with progress slow between July and August. By September 29, the number increased to [over 6.6 million doses](#), reaching 3% of the population with at least one of the two doses of the vaccine.



Fig. 1 Confirmed COVID-19 cases in Nigeria, weekly ([WHO, Nov 2021](#)).

Although the infection rates increased again over the last quarter, the Nigerian COVID-19 situation has been relatively stable across the States. While the government considers the present national COVID-19 situation as under control, every effort is directed towards preventing a possible escalation through the international borders. Therefore, in the past couple of weeks, the government has introduced travel policy measures targeting specific countries whose COVID-19 incidence rates remain high or unchecked. Included in the travel measures are obligations to present proof of vaccination before boarding an airline, which has also increased the uptake and acceptance of the COVID-19 vaccine in Nigeria.

While the Presidential Steering Committee on COVID-19, the highest national platform setup by the government at the onset of the pandemic is still active, it operates in a less aggressive manner. In official and other private professional environments like airports, international development agencies, banks, hospitals or government ministries, compliance with COVID-19 regulations is still very high and strictly monitored. However, in unregulated public places a further reduction or even stop of COVID-19 preventive compliance could be observed. Also, in the traditional wet markets the situation is similar. While most of consumers and vendors believe in preventive measures or at least wear them to attract customers, many feel that an infection is unlikely and hence tend to take measures more relaxed. However, face masks are still visible and in high demand and usage in the markets.

In GAIN focal markets, the Market Response Unit is still very active. They support the coordination of COVID-19 preventive efforts within their association including efforts for sanitization and the mass distribution of face masks to vendors and customers.

2. MARKET CHARACTERISTICS AND CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19

Utako market and **Gosa market** are both located in the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), two of eleven markets in the area (**Fig. 2**). While Utako market is in the urban center, Gosa is at the fringe of the AMAC and easily accessible for vendors, traders, and customers from different socio-economic backgrounds. The markets offer a variety of nutritious food products including grains, fruits and vegetables, dairy, meat, poultry, and fish, as well as fats and oils, eggs, legumes, and seeds. Both markets are of high importance not only locally but for the whole AMAC as they supply other food centers in the area.

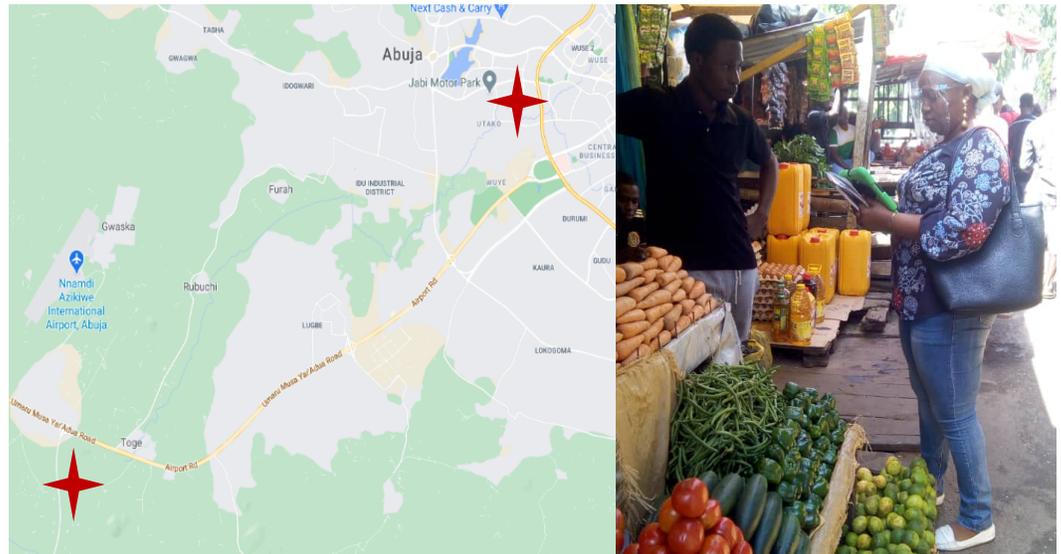


Fig. 2 Location of Utako and Gosa market (left) and Utako market (right) in Abuja, Nigeria

2.1 Utako Market, Abuja

Utako market is a semi open-air market and is well connected to farms where fresh produce is transported on well-established roads. Easy vendor access to food products leads to lower costs for vendors in the Utako market. The market operates daily but has its major market day on Saturdays. The market association reports that the number of shops and open stalls is 2,200, with 4,500-6,000 vendors operating in the market daily. About 10,000-12,000 customers go to the market each day, mainly from surrounding neighborhoods in Abuja.

2.2 Gosa Market, Abuja

Gosa market is an open-air market near the Nnamdi Azikiwe airport. It is a major food market for both wholesale and retail. While slightly south of the city center, it is a major hub also for traders and customers from other areas. While the market is open every day, Friday is the major market day, when traders conduct most wholesale transactions are from neighboring provinces and states. The market association reports a capacity of 1,500-2,500 vendors and 5,000 customers daily, with an increase to 7,000 customers on Fridays.

2.3 Bi-Weekly Consumer and Vendor Survey Results under COVID-19

In addition to the resilience assessment, EatSafe continues to conduct rapid COVID-19 market surveys of 40 consumers and 40 vendors from each market. This activity began in October 2020 and has since been repeated every two weeks, with results summarized and published in market-specific bulletins every month. Results below are from both markets including all data rounds between July 14 and September 17, 2021.¹

¹ Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. 2021. COVID Bulletin. Nigeria Issue #12. August 2021. A USAID EatSafe Project Bulletin. [Available online.](#)

2.3.1 Impact of COVID-19 in the Markets

Results of the rapid assessment indicate that 61% of consumers reported concerns when shopping in the market in recent weeks. **Fig. 3** shows that those with concerns identified the following issues: (1) fear of contracting COVID-19 (16%), (2) the inconvenience of taking protective measures (13%), (3) not trusting the market to take appropriate precautions (13%), and (4) the food wanted not being available (10%). Almost half of the consumers (47%) mentioned hand washing or sanitizer stations, the mandate to wear face masks for consumers (32%) and vendors (29%), the cleaning of markets with disinfectant (20%), and a demand for cleanliness behavior as measures currently implemented in the market to protect people from COVID-19.

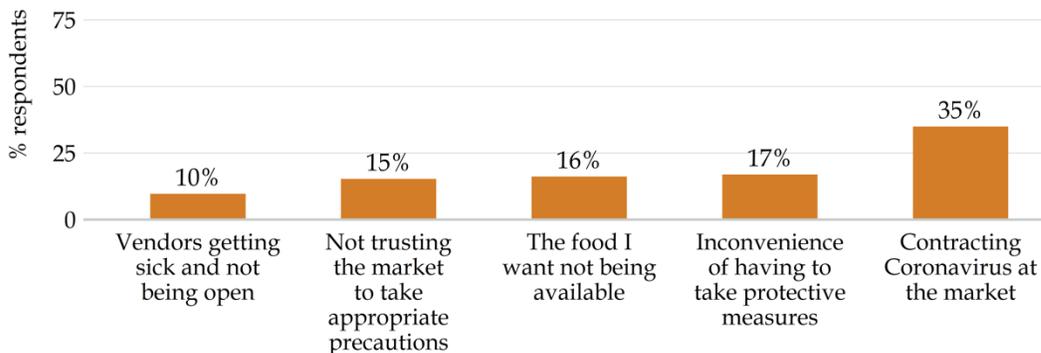


Fig. 3 Consumers: Greatest concerns when shopping at the market in the last 2 weeks

Over half of the vendors (54%) interviewed in the bi-weekly assessments stated that their business was currently being impacted by the ongoing pandemic.

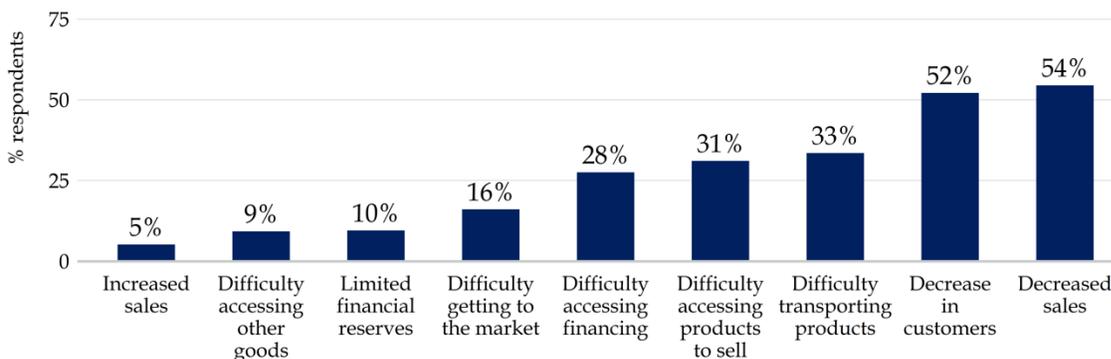


Fig. 4 Vendors: Immediate impact on business due to COVID-19

Fig. 4 shows that about one-third of the vendors experienced a decrease in customers (30%) and sales (26%), while others noted difficulties in transporting products, accessing financing, and accessing products to sell.

3. MARKET RESILIENCE UNDER COVID-19

This TMR highlights three new data sets from July, August, and September 2021. Data was collected through monthly panel interviews with 30 vendors and 32 consumers from Utako and Gosa markets, respectively. For this report, food prices were assessed between April 21 and September 15.

3.1 Connectivity

Connectivity includes not only the extent of connections vendors or other market actors might have but also the relationships between connected actors. Too many or too few connections can hamper the capacity to generate or sustain the growth of the market system. In this assessment connectivity is analyzed based on the vendors’ observations regarding the number and changes in customers and suppliers.

Between July and September, the share of vendors that reported that the number of customers in the last 30 days stayed about the same increased (37% Jul; 40% Aug; 47% Sep). At the same time the share of vendors reported an increase in customers decreased from 30% in July to 23% in August (**Fig. 5**). Over all three months, most vendors

reported to have between “11-15”, “16-25” and “26-35” customers on a typical day (60% Jul; 67% Aug; 70% Sep). While in July and August 30% and 55% of vendors, respectively, reported an increase in customers to COVID-19, 0% of vendors did so in September.

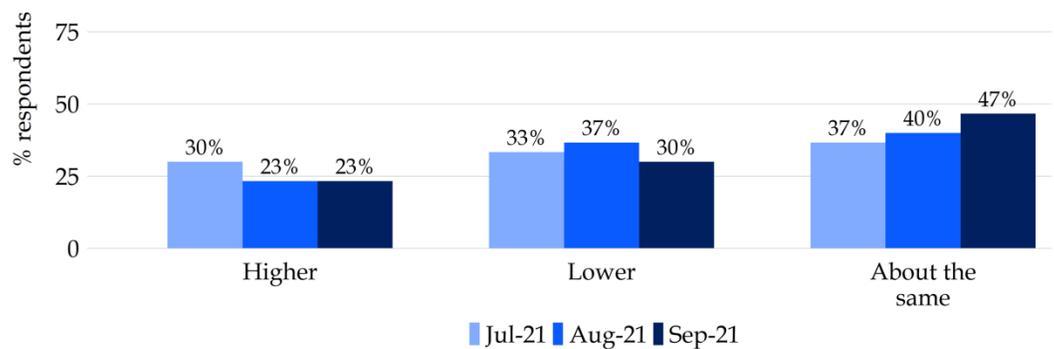


Fig. 5 Vendors: Changes in the number of customers, last 30 days

Similarly, an increasing share of vendors reported that the number of suppliers during the last 30 days stayed about the same (67% Jul; 60% Aug; 80% Sep) (**Fig. 6**). Most vendors reported to rely on “2-5” suppliers (76% Jul; 77% Aug; 80% Sep). Only 3% of the vendors in August and September (0% in July) relied on only one supplier during the last 30 days.

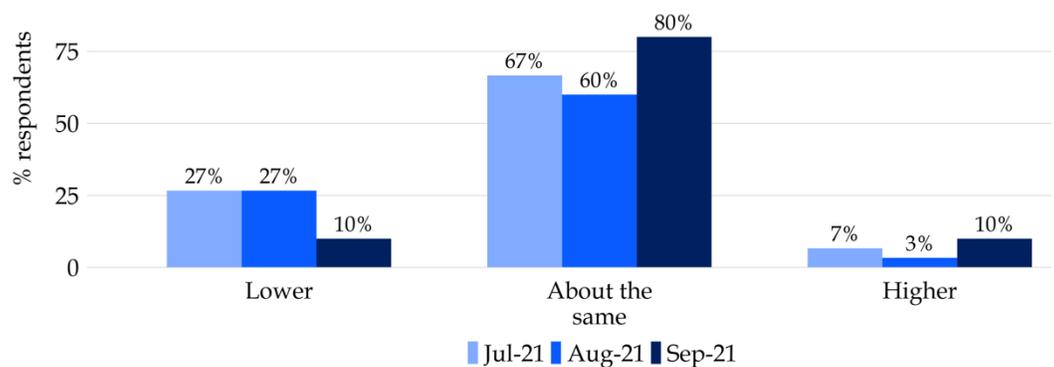


Fig. 6 Vendors: Changes in the number of suppliers, last 30 days

3.2 Diversity

Diversity has multiple dimensions, including (1) the amount of variation in a system (i.e., the frequency and purpose of visiting the markets from consumer perspectives) and (2) the balance between different types (i.e., types of products, firm sizes, marketing channels, or end markets) or (3) market system composition, (i.e., how aspects of a market system are related to each other). In this assessment, diversity was analyzed based on vendors’ observations of the number and changes to commodities sold and consumers’ shopping behavior.

Between July and September, the number of different products sold by the vendors did not change substantially (**Fig. 7**). Most vendors sold “2-5” or “6-15” products (90% Jul; 93% Aug; 87% Sep). The share of vendors that reported selling new or more food groups compared to before COVID-19 in the last 30 days before the assessment was 23% Jul; 46% Aug and 30% Sep. About one third of vendors reported to have stopped or sell less of certain food groups (41% Jul; 30% Aug; 33% Sep). Overall, food groups in which changes (selling new, more, less, or stopped selling) were reported were mainly grains, meat, poultry and fish, vegetables, and pulses. Major reasons for selling new, or more food groups were due to demand, while stopped selling or selling less were mainly due to prices and seasonality.

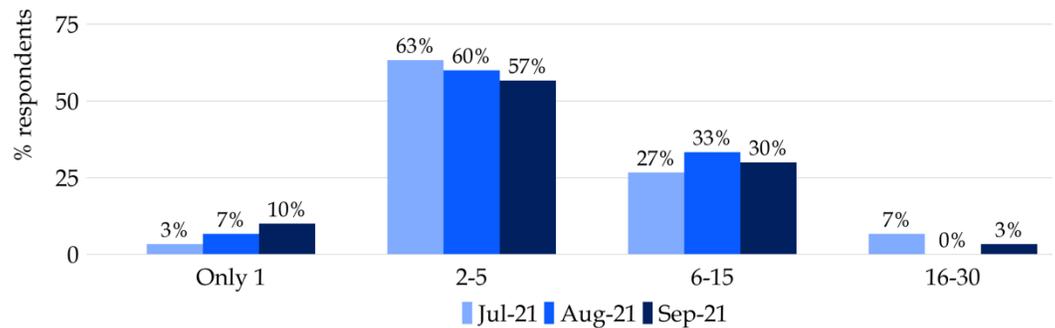


Fig. 7 Vendors: Number of different products sold

Consumers’ frequency of visiting the markets did not change substantially between July and September (**Fig. 8**). While the share of consumers that went “every 2-3 days” increased in August (from 6% Jul to 25% Aug) before decreasing to 3% Sep). The overall share of those visiting the markets at least once a week stayed about the same (72% Jul; 78% Aug; 72% Sep).

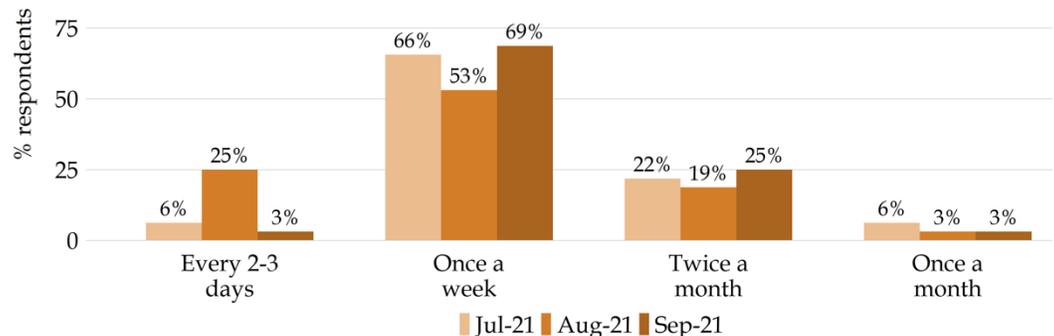


Fig. 8 Consumers: Frequency of visiting the markets

For all consumers, in all three months, the main purpose for visiting the markets was to buy foods or other goods for themselves or the own family (100% Jul/Aug/Sep). In August, 31% of consumers also went to the market to buy foods or other goods for relatives that were unable to go shopping.

3.3 Equity and Fairness

From a systems perspective, **equity and fairness** refers to the level or degree of equality and fairness inherent rules and laws, both informal and formal. The panel of vendors were asked how difficult it was for

them to follow the new rules and regulations enacted due to COVID-19 (e.g., social distancing, wearing a face mask, and performing hand sanitizing and temperature checks when entering the market space).

Overall, the level of difficulty for vendors following new rules and regulations put in place due to COVID-19 decreased further between July to September (Fig. 9).

Most vendors found it not very difficult or not difficult at all to follow new regulations (77% Jul/Aug; 87% Sep).

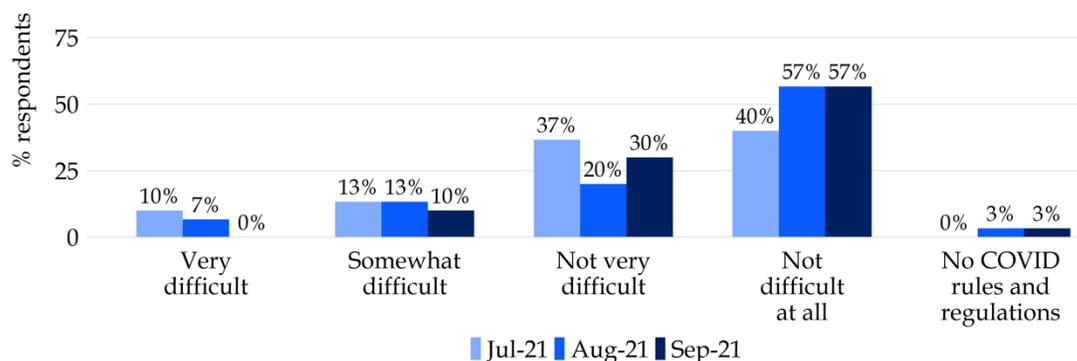


Fig. 9 Vendors: Difficulty following COVID-19 rules, last 30 days

3.4 Cooperation

Cooperation refers to market actors collaborating to achieve a common purpose or function. Cooperation is neither good nor bad and the contribution of cooperation depends on the purpose. Here cooperation was measured asking vendors if they have started sharing resources with other businesses due to COVID-19.

The share of vendors that started sharing resources with other businesses in the last 30 days did not change substantially between July and September (33% Jul; 13% Aug; 23% Sep). However, the focus of resources shared was much broader in September compared to the other months. Sanitizers (80% Jul; 100% Aug; 86% Sep), new hand washing facilities (50% Jul/Aug; 86% Sep) and masks (20% Jul; 25% Aug; 71% Sep) were mentioned (Fig. 10).

In addition to these shared, transportation (86%), suppliers (43%) and storage rooms (50%) were also mentioned (43%) in September.

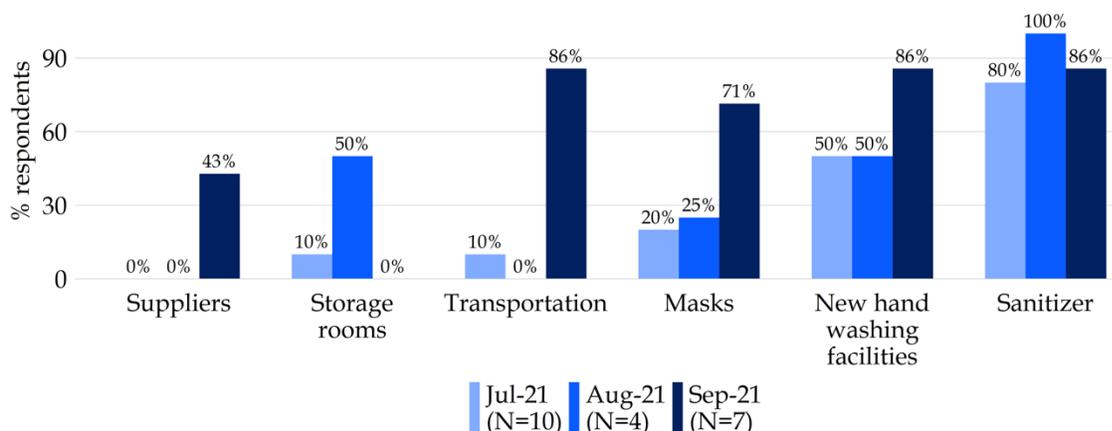


Fig. 10 Vendors: Resources shared with other businesses, last 30 days.

3.5 Competition

Competition is defined as rivalry between two or more entities. Like cooperation, competition can be negative or positive. Its contribution to system resilience capacities depends on how and why entities compete. Competition in this assessment is measured based on changing vendors practices reflecting what they saw from their competitors and on consumers' reasons, trust, and loyalty in the vendors from where they buy food.

Between July and September, only a few vendors (10% Jul; 7% Aug/Sep) reported changes in their own business practices based on competitors during the last 30 days. In July, those vendors that reported business practice changes added the offer of a discount (100%), opening hours (33%), offer of services (33%) or advertisement (33%). Consumers changed the foods they usually bought at the markets: while most consumers stated to buy **less** foods (44% Jul/Aug; 38% Sep) (Fig. 11), a few stopped buying certain foods (19% Jul; 0% Aug; 9% Sep), bought **more** foods (12% Jul; 3% Aug; 12% Sep), or **new** foods (16% Jul; 25% Aug; 3% Sep) than the food they used to buy before COVID-19. Overall, purchase behavior changes

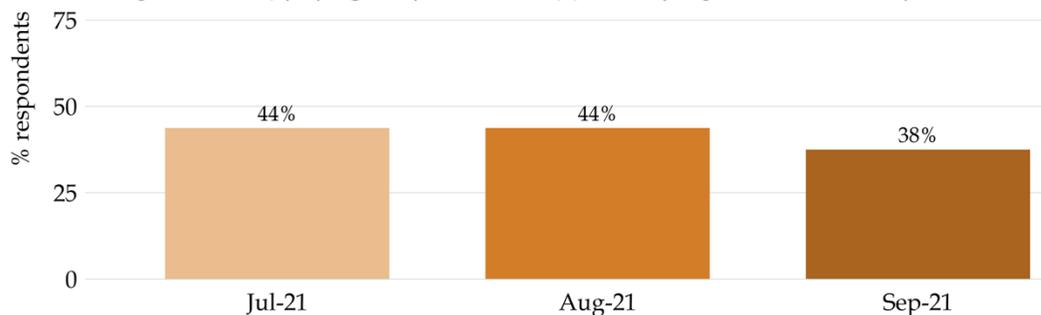


Fig. 11 Consumers: Buying less foods than before the pandemic, last 30 days

affected the same food groups (e.g., grains, roots, tuber, plantain); however, eggs were particularly mentioned by those that added new foods. Reasons for changes in the shopping behavior were majorly due to prices.

Although the two markets were overall still (the most) common places to obtain foods, the share of consumers that reported doing most of their food shopping at the markets changed from 62% in July to 47% in August and 53% in September

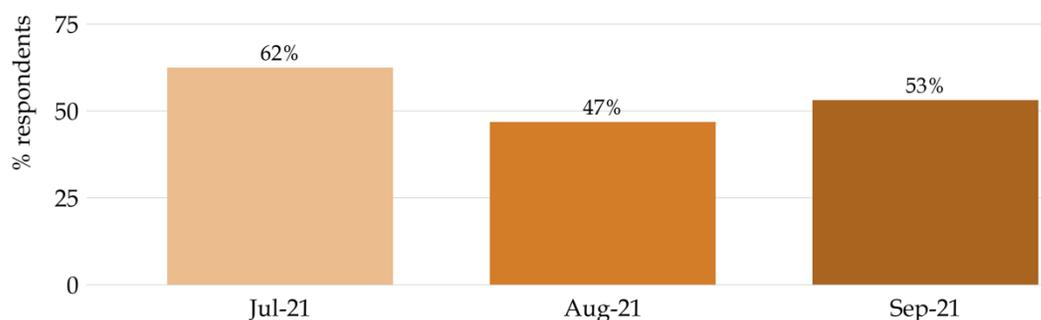


Fig. 12 Consumers: Doing most of food shopping at Gosa or Utako market

(Fig. 12). Other open-air markets (66% Jul; 81% Aug; 56% Sep), supermarkets (19% Jul; 22% Aug/Sep) and small shops (9% Jul; 16% Aug; 19% Sep) were alternative places where consumers bought food. The reasons for buying food at were similar during the three rounds and included convenience/easy to reach from home (72% Jul; 75% Aug; 59% Sep), good quality or freshness of food (69% Jul; 62% Aug; 69% Sep), and good prices (72% Jul; 56% Aug; 69% Sep). In addition, the reason of good selection of food increased from 34% in July, to 56% in August and 66% in September.

Similar to fewer consumers doing their shopping at one of the two markets, the level of trust for the vendors that consumers bought food from changed slightly (Fig. 13). The share of those

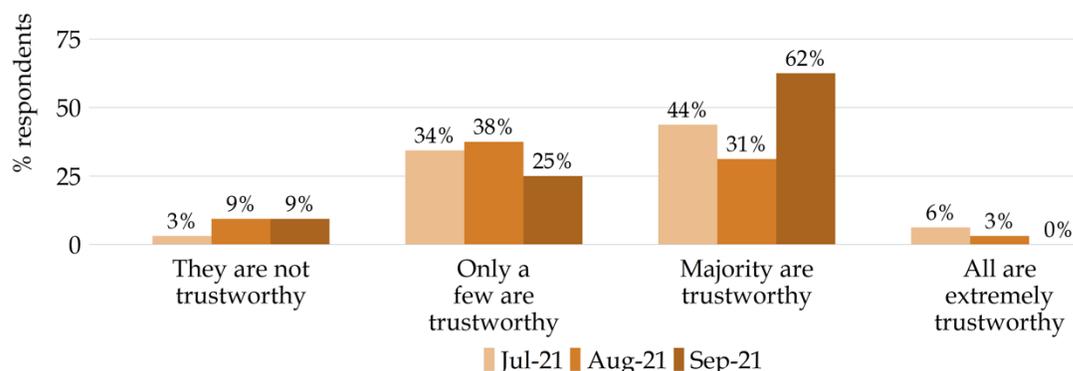


Fig. 13 Consumers: Level of trust for the vendors they buy food from

consumers that said majority or all of the vendors are trustworthy changed from 60% in July to 34% in August and 62% in September.

The reasons for those with a good level of trust are shown in **Fig. 14** and mainly included good quality/freshness of food (50% Jul; 27% Aug; 70% Sep), knowing the vendor well (25% Jul; 73% Aug; 30% Sep), identify with other customers (38% Jul; 45% Aug; 25% Sep) and low prices (31% Jul; 27% Aug; 35% Sep). While good quality/freshness of food were major reasons in July and September, knowing the vendor well and identifying

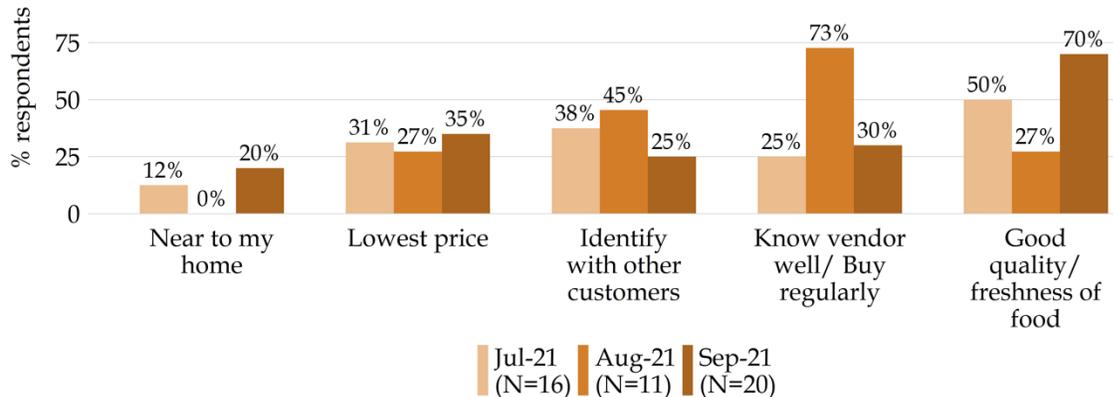


Fig. 14 Consumers: Reasons for good level of trust

with other customers was mostly important for consumers in August. For those consumers that only described a few vendors as trustworthy or not at all trustworthy, major reasons included high (42% Jul; 33% Aug; 36% Sep) or changing prices (42% Jul; 33% Aug; 36% Sep) and not knowing the vendor well (42% Jul; 27% Aug/Sep). Furthermore, reasons like vendors using different methods (33% Jul; 27% Aug; 9% Sep) or being of different ethnicity (25% Jul; 13% Aug; 0% Sep) decreased, while “not being able to identify with other customers” increased from 0% in July to 13% in August and 36% in September.

While the level of trust changed over the three months, vendor loyalty increased slightly (**Fig. 15**). About half of the consumers (47% Jul; 50% Aug; 53% Sep) bought usually or always

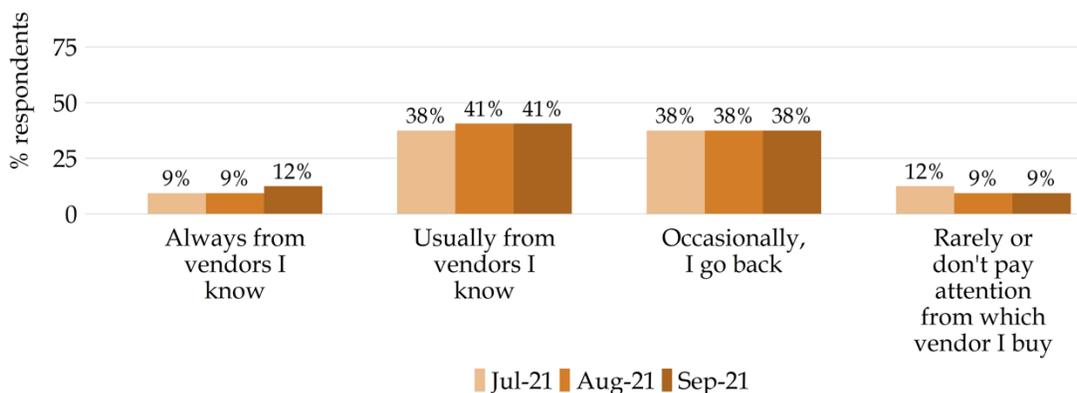


Fig. 15 Consumers: Frequency of buying at the same vendor

usually or always from the vendors they know. The other half of consumers (50% Jul; 47% Aug/Sep) visited the same vendors occasionally or rarely (or did not pay attention).

3.6 Business Strategy

Business practices are oriented toward generating value for customers. They can be investments in understanding customers, in building customer relationships, in tracking customer retention and growth, in investing in staff and firm capacity, and in merit-based hiring. Business strategy in this assessment has been measured based on vendors' business practices, training possibilities and additional funding, as well as consumers' being asked for feedback.

The share of vendors that used business strategies to increase the number of customers and sales during the last 30 days stayed low and almost unchanged (17% Jul; 10% Aug; 13% Sep). Types of strategies taken in September included the provision of discount (100%), provision of additional services (25%), and credit (25%).

Fig. 16 depicts the reasons for vendors that did not use any business strategy, which included no money for advertisement (32% Jul; 52% Aug; 35% Sep), no need of promotion (28% Jul; 26% Aug; 27% Sep), not thinking that it would matter (16% Jul; 19% Aug; 27% Sep) or not wanting to (24% Jul; 15% Aug; 8% Sep).

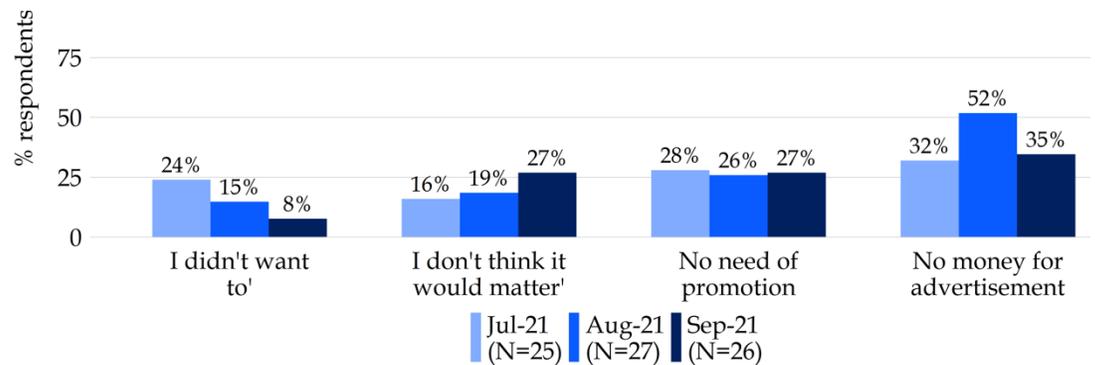


Fig. 16 Vendors: Reasons for not using business strategies, last 30 days

Overall, the share of vendors being aware of business training and support being offered by market authorities due to COVID-19 increased (7% Jul; 10% Aug; 23% Sep).

The share of vendors that reported borrowing money to pay for unexpected expenses due to COVID-19 in the last 30 days decreased from 27% in July to 20% in August and September. **Fig. 17** depicts the diversity and changes of the sources for money over the three months.

While informal cooperatives and friends were mentioned by a quarter to half of vendors in July (38% and 25%) and August (50% and 33%), other businesses and relatives were also mentioned by 33% of vendors in September.

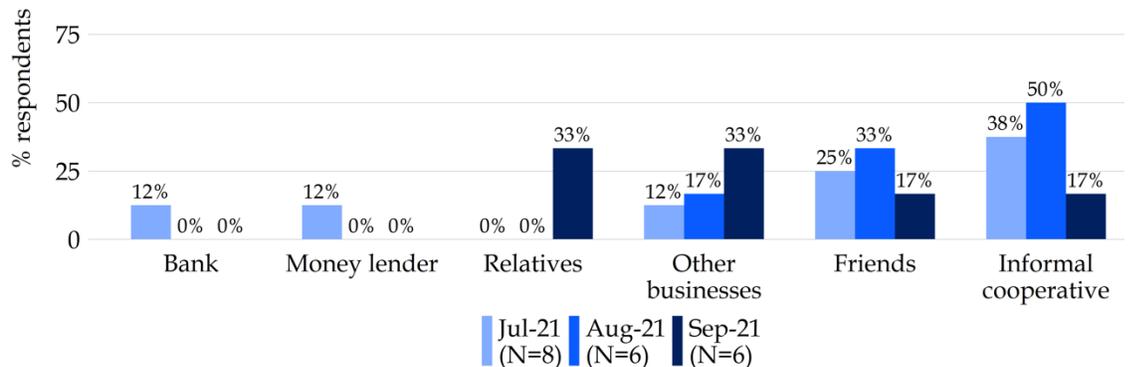


Fig. 17 Vendors: Source of borrowed money due to COVID-19, last 30 days

Between July and September, the share of consumers being asked to provide feedback by market officials or vendors increased from 3% in July, to 9% in August and 22% in September. Of those asked in September, 100% noticed that their feedback was addressed or taken on board.

4. FOOD PRICES

Tracking food prices allows market stakeholders to assess supply and demand of foods in the market. In this assessment, prices of different nutritious commodities and food groups have been tracked over time in NGN.²

Between April and September, the food prices for pulses (white, brown and soya beans) increased by 39%, 37% and 7%, respectively (**Fig. 18**). The increases for brown and white beans were smaller over the three months (brown beans 14%; white beans 7%); soya bean prices decreased by 9% between August and

September. Comparing the price data on pulses with the monthly food prices collected for Abuja by the [Consumer Price Index \(CPI\) by the National Bureau of Statistics](#), similar price increases can be observed for brown and white beans (Apr to Sep: 45% and 38%, respectively). Since the official price statistic includes a wider range of markets, this report

assumes the underlying assessments are valid for the two markets. Overall, the increases in prices for pulses can be explained by seasonality and external factors (e.g., security challenges).

Fig. 19 shows prices for carrots, lettuce, and tomatoes. Besides a peak of tomato prices in June and July, overall vegetable prices stayed about the same between April and September (carrots/lettuce 0%; tomatoes -3%). While the tomato price changes by the official statistics for Abuja state are different (Apr to Sep: 100%), similar price fluctuation can be observed over the months.

Fig. 20 shows prices for eggs (1 crate, 30 pieces), chicken, beef, and fresh fish. Besides fish, prices for eggs, beef and chicken increased by 11%, 10% and 6%, respectively between April and September.

Prices for fish stayed unchanged. The official statistics for Abuja State showed a comparable increase in prices for eggs (11%), beef (15%) and chicken (13%) between April and September. Besides substantial price increases in tomatoes and beans, official price data for Abuja State shows that prices for plantain (ripe), yam tuber, and mudfish increased by 65%, 63% and 53%, respectively, between Apr-Sep. Furthermore, the urban [CPI](#) in Nigeria increased by 5%.

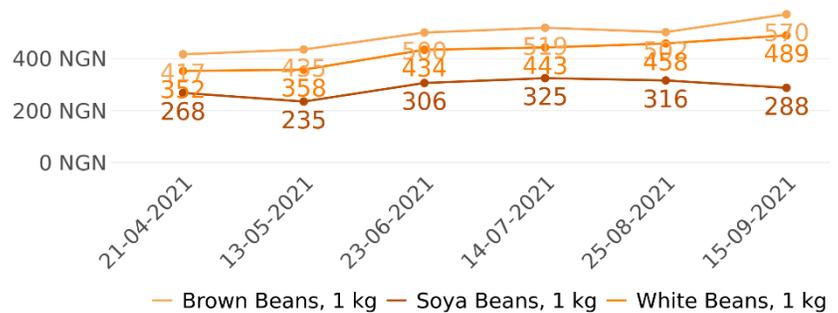


Fig. 18 Prices for selected pulses, in NGN/kg

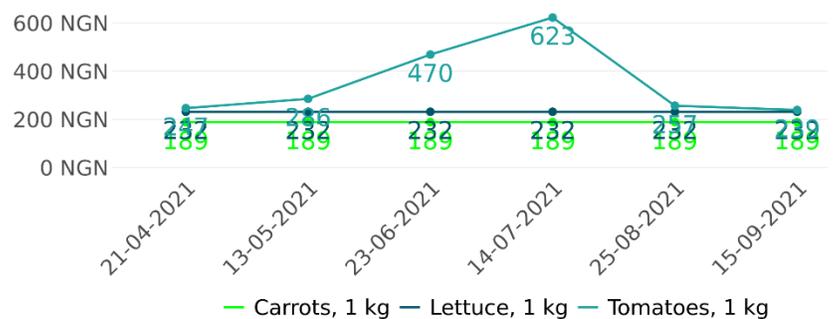


Fig. 19 Prices for selected vegetables, in NGN/kg



Fig. 20 Prices for eggs, meat, and fish, in NGN

² As of September 15, 2021, 500 NGN \approx 1.22 US\$.

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENT SAMPLE

VENDOR (n=30)

- 67% of the vendors are male. More than half (57%) are in the age group 31-40 years of age (Tab. 1).
- 50% of vendors have never attended school.
- Most vendors sold poultry, meat and fish (50%), grains, legumes, roots and tuber (30%), packed or cooked food (23%), egg and dairy (20%) or fruits and vegetables (17%) (as of September).
- 74% of vendors have been operating in the market for 5 years or longer and (as of September 2021) 93% of vendors aim to continue with their business even if COVID-19 continues.

CONSUMER (n=32)

- 69% of the consumers are female. Most are in the age groups 31-40 (44%) or 51-65 years of age (41%).
- 56% of consumers attended secondary school.
- 56% of consumers lived in Abuja for 10+ years.
- For about half of the consumers and their households', the financial situation has worsened compared to before COVID-19 (53% Jul; 50% Aug; 47% Sep); 80% of those negatively affected reported increased costs of basic items. As coping mechanisms to this shock, 47% reduced income through fewer business opportunities; 80% engaged in other income earning activities or relied on savings (40%) (as of September).

Tab. 1 Characteristics of respondents in this panel (as of September 2021)

	VENDORS (n =30)	CONSUMERS (n = 32)
Gender (male female)	67% 33%	31% 69%
<i>Age group</i>		
25-30 years	13%	9%
31-40 years	57%	44%
41-50 years	3%	6%
51-65 years	27%	41%
<i>Highest level of school attended</i>		
Primary school	20%	41%
Secondary school	20%	56%
Higher education	10%	3%
No school attended	50%	0%
<i>Length of operating in the market (vendor) living in Abuja (consumer)</i>		
<1 year	3%	0%
1-3 years	3%	3%
3-5 years	20%	3%
5-10 years	37%	38%
>10 years	37%	56%

6. METHODS ASSESSING MARKET CHARACTERISTICS UNDER COVID-19, RESILIENCE AND FOOD PRICES

Insights into **market system resilience** were based on interviews with 32 consumers and 30 vendors from two informal markets in Abuja, who were interviewed between July 21 and September 21, 2021. The panel of vendors and consumers was purposefully selected from Utako and Gosa markets in Abuja in December 2020. The panel was based on the respondent's gender and age profiles, which were previously examined in rapid assessments (see below). The same panel of consumers and vendors are interviewed monthly via phone interviews and following a structured questionnaire.

The [USAID Market System Resilience Framework](#) defines market system resilience as “...the ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.” For market systems, resilience further includes the ability to allocate resources, draw on optimal resources, and innovate to solve problems in the face of shocks and stresses. This report uses six of the eight domains highlighted in the USAID framework to characterize resilience capacities (connectivity, diversity, equity and fairness, cooperation, competition, business strategy) with both fast and slow indicators.

In addition to data on market system resilience, this report conducted a **rapid assessment** from 1,360 consumers and 1,360 vendors from Utako and Gosa markets. Approximately every two weeks, 40 consumer and 40 vendors in each market were randomly selected for surveys. All surveys were conducted in adherence with global guidelines on COVID-19 prevention and control. Data included in this report were collected between July 14 and September 17 from 320 consumers and 320 vendors (“[Market characteristics and changes due to COVID-19](#)”). All data were collected via Open Data Kit and stored on KoBo Toolbox; Stata version 15.1 was used for data analysis.

Food prices for selected nutritious foods (pulses, vegetables, and animal source foods) were collected approximately every two weeks from each market. Prices were assessed on April, 21, May 13, June 23, July 14, August 25, and September 15, 2021. Foods were selected based on its nutritive value, availability, and cultural acceptance. Data for foods were collected in standard units (kilogram or crate), and prices were averaged using NGN ([500 NGN \$\triangleq\$ 1.22 US\\$](#)). For each round and food item, three comparative prices from three vendors in each market were collected by trained enumerators at similar times and days of the week. The weight of pulses, fish, and vegetables were collected together with the price assessment, and average weights for standard units were then calculated. Although not all the assessed commodities are directly comparable to the official prices for Abuja state in the monthly [CPI by the National Bureau of Statistics](#), EatSafe tracked and compared official bi-monthly price data and compared the national assessments to the average monthly prices of this assessment, allowing for validation of these data.

7. GAIN COVID-19 RESPONSE

The necessary COVID-19 lockdowns have placed a spotlight on the weaknesses of food systems across the world. In the COVID-19 context the single most important thing that can be done for the health and resilience of people and economies is to protect the nutritional status of current and future generations. GAIN has developed the [Keeping Food Markets Working \(KFMW\) program](#) as an emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis, providing rapid support to food system workers, to small and medium enterprises supplying nutritious foods, and to keeping fresh food markets open. While disease control responses to the pandemic are essential, they also disrupt food systems, depress income, and put a strain on social protection programs, which can threaten the nutritional status of the most vulnerable. The KFMW program is focused on mitigating those risks and keeping affordable nutritious foods flowing in African and Asian markets to the people who most need it. The KFMW program consists of five workstreams:

1. Building resilience of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
2. Maintaining and reinforcing efforts in Large-Scale Food Fortification
3. **Ensuring food markets stay open and are operating safely**
4. Investing in nutrition security for key workers in the food system
5. Supporting effective policymaking and coordination during the pandemic

Through KFMW, EatSafe is working to better understand the rapidly changing situation in traditional food markets from the vendor and consumer perspective under workstream 3.

8. EATSAFE DATA COLLECTION FOR MUNICIPALITIES

EatSafe: Evidence and Action Towards Safe, Nutritious Food, is a five-year project aiming to enable lasting improvements in the safety of nutritious foods in traditional markets by focusing on the consumer. The COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the world into an unprecedented global health crisis. Difficult to manage at the best of times, traditional markets are generally crowded with customers and vendors creating ideal conditions for transmission of the virus. When market vendors and other food system workers cannot do their jobs, increased food prices and/or food shortages are likely to result in reducing demand for fresh, nutritious foods and eroding market resilience. Furthermore, real, and perceived risks can undermine consumer trust in the health and safety of food markets.

EatSafe's COVID-19 response is working to better understand the rapidly changing situation in traditional food markets from the vendor and consumer perspective. Through bi-weekly market surveys and monthly key informant interviews, EatSafe is assessing the accessibility of safe nutritious food, availability of health and safety information and the resilience of traditional markets. EatSafe will continue to use and disseminate results to help ensure food markets remain open, that safe, nutritious food is available under COVID-19 and to support future programming for safe and resilient nutritious food markets.

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For more details on EatSafe program activities, visit gainhealth.org/EatSafe or contact EatSafe@gainhealth.org.



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