



OSH in Urban Public Workplaces

Presentation by Laura Alfes, WIEGO Social Protection Programme

Market vendor Vida Ofori from Makola Market in downtown Accra, poses for Jonathan Torgovnik/Getty Images.



Photo credit:
Angela Buckland,
Xolisile Mhlongo is
a Bovine Head
Cook, selling this
traditional
delicacy in the
Warwick Junction
precinct of Central
Durban.

Read Xolisile's
Story:

<https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/WIEGO-Health-Profile-Xolisile.pdf>

OSH & Poverty Alleviation

- Informal employment is a significant contributor to poverty reduction:
 - 9 % of income keeping households above the poverty line comes from social grants
 - 14% of income keeping households above the poverty line comes from informal employment
 - 38% of income keeping households above the poverty line comes from formal employment
- Supporting the income security of workers in the informal sector is important to poverty reduction.

Source: Rogan, M & Cichello, P. 2017

Informal Workers, OHS & the Law

- Informal workers are excluded from the provisions of the OHS Act (de facto) because:
 - There is often no employment relationship & self-employment is not appropriately covered for the context of informality & poverty.
 - Work in urban public space (i.e. outside of formal workplaces) is not appropriately regulated by the Act.
- South Africa has ratified the ICESCR, CEDAW and the ILO Occupational Health and Safety Convention, which require member states to extend OHS protection to informal workers.
- ILO Recommendation 204: Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy:
 - Clause 17: Take immediate measures to address unhealthy and unsafe working conditions and promote and extend OHS protection to workers in the informal economy.

Considerations for OSH Interventions in Public Space

- Informal workers do not operate “outside of the state” although they operate outside of labour regulation. They are included into urban systems, often on adverse, risk-creating terms (e.g. urban systems).
 - Ensuring a supportive & enabling urban environment is key
- Self-regulation requires a supportive and enabling environment – who will support informal workers to promote safer and healthier work practices?
- Must account for the diversity of occupations & risk in the informal economy
- Work with organizations of informal workers to identify priorities and design solutions

The coronavirus is highly infectious.

It spreads through contact with people who already have the virus – even those who do not show symptoms – or from touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose. COVID-19 sticks to surfaces - plastic, cardboard, metal, wood and money. It can survive for up to five days. These are some guidelines to prevent being infected and infecting others.

Research shows that across the global South, informal operators are key to the food security of low-income households. Some countries have recognised this and declared informal food traders essential service providers.

As long as safety guidelines are followed, informal traders can trade as safely as supermarkets.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:



Most people infected with COVID-19 experience a cough, fever, a sore throat and shortness of breath but are able to recover at home. Older people, and those with medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness. If you have a cough, fever, a sore throat and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention. Call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority. The World Health Organisation provides regularly updated advice for the public [here](#)

STAY AT HOME:

Doctors advise staying at home, if you can. This is why direct income support from national government to all informal workers is critical.

- Elderly people are particularly at risk if they contract the virus. If you are elderly or live with elderly people (those over 60), you should stay at home.
- If you are unwell with an existing condition, or older than 60, you should ask someone else to run your business for you during the COVID-19 epidemic.



IF YOU ARE AT WORK AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE PROVIDER:

Fingers interlaced



Thumbs



1 Wash your hands with soap and water often:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Clean all parts of your hands and fists, washing between fingers and fingertips and halfway up your forearms.
- Wash your hands before you start your workday, throughout the day, and especially before eating.
- Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands after touching any object that others regularly touch.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.

NOTE: Hand sanitisers do not work as a preventative measure on dirty hands - because the virus sticks to the dirt on your hands. When you wash your hands, do not touch the tap with your hands. Open and close it with a piece of newspaper that you throw away afterwards.



2 Avoid touching your face – especially your eyes, mouth and nose. When you cough or sneeze, cover your face with the inside of your elbow.



3 Wear a cloth mask that covers your mouth and nose. Avoid touching the mask. Wash and iron after use. Have a few masks so that you always have a clean one to wear. Encourage customers to wear masks too.



4 Avoid touching people. Do not greet people by touching them. Keep 2 metres away from people. Where this is impossible, then at least keep at arm's length.

5 Street and market traders' need to trade two metres apart, so local governments need to be flexible with trader layouts and locations.

6 Customers should keep two metres distance from each other, by queuing alongside trader/market stalls or outside spasas. Drawing lines on the ground is a simple way to show how people should queue and how far they should stay from you and your stall/shop.



7 Give priority to high-risk customers (such as pensioners and pregnant women) by giving them preference in queues.

8 Ask customers not to touch products (as far as possible).

How to make your own disinfectant:

If you do not have sanitisers 1 cup of bleach in 6 cups of water is an effective

9 Clean all frequently touched surfaces, including your cell phone screen, and also door handles and railings.

10 Street and market traders:

Clean your tables and products with disinfectant

How to build a wash station:

If you do not have running water on site for you and your customers, consider

11 Avoid handling cash: Encourage customers to deposit cash in a box or jar. Coins can be dropped into a soapy/bleach solution first.

POLICY ISSUES FOR SAFE FOOD TRADE:

These guidelines were developed by WIEGO in close consultation with experts in public health (Professors Rajen Naidoo and Leslie London of the Universities of KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town) and the informal

https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/resources/file/WIEGO_COVID19_Health_Guidelines_SVs_April2020.pdf

THANK YOU!

More Information on Informal Workers:

www.wiego.org

For international examples in extending OHS to informal workers:

New Solutions: Journal of Occupational & Environmental Health Policy

Special Journal Edition on the Informal Economy:

Lund, F & Naidoo, R (Eds.). 2016, Vol 26 (2)

On legal provisions in South Africa:

Bamu-Chipunza, P. 2018. Extending OHS Law to Informal Workers: The Case of Street Vendors in South Africa:

<https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/3-OHS-to-Informal-Workers.pdf>