



Learning from COVID-19: how have informal workers experienced the pandemic?

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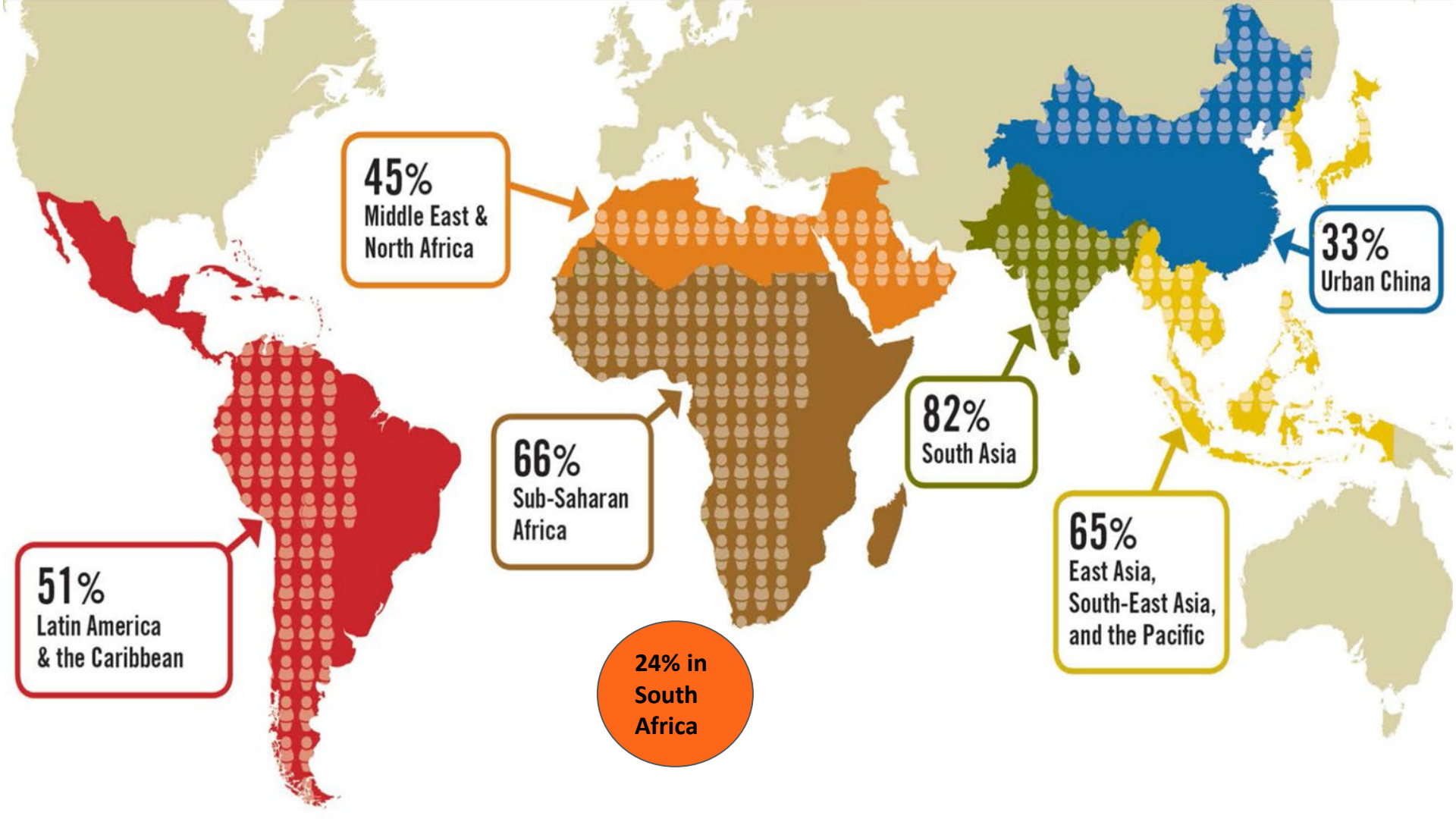
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Background to WIEGO

- Global network of researchers, development practitioners and workers in the informal economy
- Present in over 40 countries - mainly across Asia, Africa and Latin America
- Four key groups of workers in informal economy as focus: waste pickers / reclaimers, street vendors, domestic workers and home-based workers



Waste-picker from COMARP cooperative in Brazil.
Credit: Julian Luckman



45%
Middle East &
North Africa

33%
Urban China

51%
Latin America
& the Caribbean

66%
Sub-Saharan
Africa

**24% in
South
Africa**

82%
South Asia

65%
East Asia,
South-East Asia,
and the Pacific

Informality and OHS

- Workers in informal employment remain **exposed**, yet largely **unprotected in the workplace**
- Mostly **uncovered** by occupational health and safety laws and frameworks:
 - Informal employment is outside of formal employment relationship
 - Working in urban public spaces and in private spaces often not regulated - they are outside of formal workplaces
 - Location of workplace can determine access to better health and safety
- Workers often forced to become **self-reliant** in managing OHS, while also facing **income insecurity**

COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy Study

- Global study of impact of COVID-19 on workers in informal economy across 12 cities
- Longitudinal, mixed methods study in two waves: April-July 2020 and June - October 2021
- c.2000 workers in variety of occupational sectors, including c.200 in Durban



COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy Informal Workers in Durban, South Africa



The vast majority of informal workers were unable to work during the lockdown in April 2020. The effects have been long-lasting. By July, none of the occupational groups surveyed had returned to pre-lockdown average levels of daily income. (This is prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic). Photo credit: Angèle Buckland

Key Findings

Restrictions and the economic crisis associated with the COVID-19 impact have had a profound impact on informal workers in Durban, South Africa, in terms of their ability to work, income, and household and care responsibilities.

1. 97% of street vendors, 95% of market traders and 74% of waste pickers stopped working in April 2020 during the heaviest restrictions. By July, none of the occupational groups surveyed had returned to pre-lockdown average levels of daily income, with 72% of workers reporting a drop in household income compared to pre-lockdown levels. Waste pickers reported earning 70% of their pre-lockdown earnings and street vendors were earning less than half of pre-lockdown earnings.
2. Although the majority of street vendors and waste pickers were able to return to work by July, 50% of market traders were not able to continue working after the strict lockdown, with 52% reporting zero earnings in July. Reasons for this include the high price of produce, insufficient capital to restock, health concerns and municipal regulations that have interrupted the footfall into the market.
3. Food security has been a major concern for informal workers, with 81% of workers reporting incidents of hunger among adult members of their household during lockdown. In households with children, 90% reported incidents of hunger among children.
4. The dire situation of informal workers has been exacerbated by punitive and unsupportive enforcement of rules and regulations by the eThekweni Municipality, including a lack of consultation with informants on the impounding of goods and produce, or regulation of market spaces, and continuing, sometimes violent behaviour towards waste pickers and street vendors.
5. During the lockdown, workers across occupational groups reported increases in unpaid household work such as cooking, cleaning and child care increases more frequently than men.
6. In July, 29% of workers reported receipt of financial support from the government, and 38% of workers reported receipt of cash from the government and food aid. The receipt of cash and food aid was uneven across sectors and genders. Waste pickers and other occupational groups that do not receive cash from the government, while more likely to have received support, were twice as likely to have received cash.



April 2021

COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy

Policy Insights No. 4

Essential, but Unprotected: How Have Informal Workers Navigated the Health Risks of the Pandemic?

Christy Braham and Ana Carolina Qgandó

Key Findings

Between February and June 2020:

1. Informal workers have deferred essential services throughout the pandemic, which directly exposed them to physical and mental health risks and threatened their welfare.
2. Despite the essential nature of their work, informal workers have been largely unprotected, with the costs of sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) and accessing clean water and sanitation borne by workers themselves.
3. Health-related mutual aid and solidarity provided by membership-based organizations of informal workers to worker communities have proven vital in the absence of governmental support.
4. The onset of the pandemic necessitated an increased awareness of occupational health and safety among informal workers, which may have long-term benefits.

Policy Recommendations

1. Municipalities need to provide support to enhance occupational health and safety for workers and help them prevent COVID-19 infection and transmission. This should be in the form of PPE, adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, basic work infrastructure and clear guidelines for informal employers.
2. Membership-based organizations providing mutual aid to informal workers must be adequately resourced by way of funds and supplies. Supporting this complementary model is crucial, as membership-based organizations are best able to reach informal workers through long-term engagement and trust.



COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy in Durban, South Africa: Lasting Impacts and an Agenda for Recovery



Cover Photo: Warwick Junction's Informal Markets in central Durban, South Africa.
Photo Credit: Dennis Gilbert

COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy Study



- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1- Accra (Ghana) | 7- Lima (Peru) |
| 2- Ahmedabad (India) | 8- Mexico City (Mexico) |
| 3- Bangkok (Thailand) | 9- Pleven (Bulgaria) |
| 4- Dakar (Senegal) | 10- New York City (USA) |
| 5- Delhi (India) | 11- Tiruppur (India) |
| 6- Durban (South Africa) | |

Figure 1: Cities included in the Study (WIEGO, 2021)

COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy: Durban insights

More than 30% of street vendors and reclaimers/waste pickers had a positive COVID-19 test

- **High use of PPE**, but 73% of **workers needed to buy it themselves**, with most of the rest supplied by local informal worker organisations
- Almost all (96%) workers reported **exposure to COVID-19** in workplace
- Around half of all workers reported **longer working hours and heavier physical labour** compared to earlier stages of pandemic
- **Poor access to water** in the workplace - 85% of reclaimers / waste pickers in collection sites and 86% of street vendors had no access to water
- In general - very little / no improvement in working conditions over course of pandemic

COVID-19 Crisis and the Informal Economy: Durban insights

Low rate of COVID-19 vaccination of workers in most cities, with 28% of workers in Durban reporting being vaccinated

At the time, vaccines were not reaching many workers - vaccine procurement issues, lower accessibility of clinics, and issues with lack of paperwork/ID

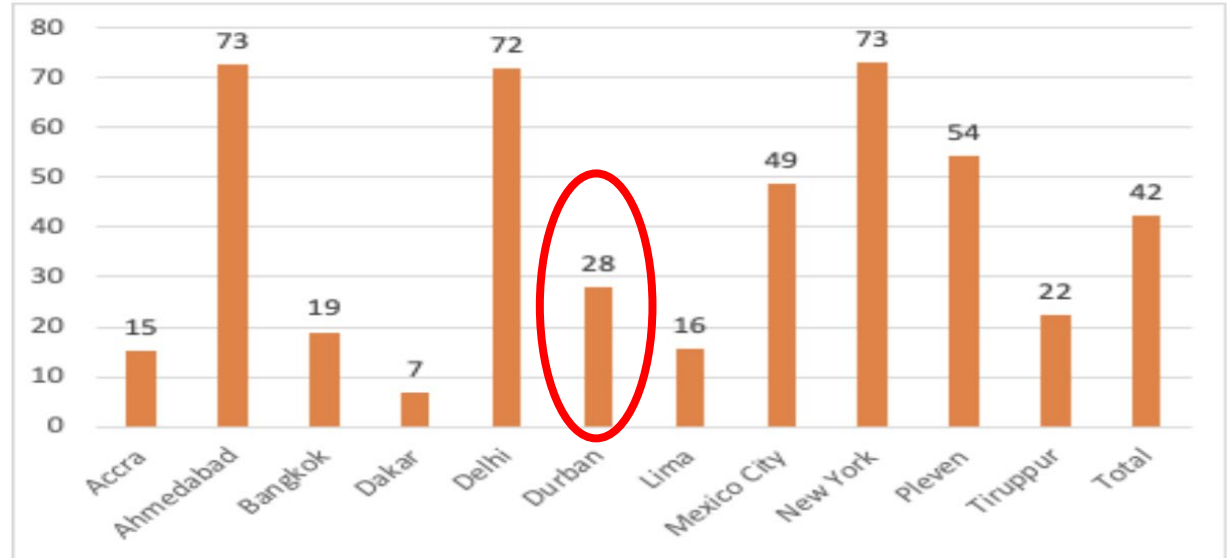


Figure 2: Vaccination rate across all occupations, by city (WIEGO, 2021)

COVID-19 guidelines for street market vendors

- Provides COVID-19 health, rights and financial support information to workers in markets, streets and home shops
- Developed and disseminated in April 2020, in consultation with academics from Universities of KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town, Socio-economic Rights Institute (SERI) and informal worker organisations: South African Informal Traders Alliance (SAITA) and Asiye Etafuleni
- Poster available in English, Afrikaans, Sotho, Xhosa and Zulu

COVID 19 - MELAO YA BAKHOEBI BA SA REROANG (literateng, marakeng le khoebo ya lapeng)

Covid-19 e tsoetsana haholo.
Ea hasana ka batho ba nang le kokotana hloko - le ba sa bontšeng matsoa a yona. COVID-19 e hasana haholo ka matle le manina. Ha bona le a zohobang, a thimoteng kapa a boang. Ba tseka ka mathe kapa manina.

Kokotana hloko e hasana mo nang le batho ba bangata teng, le mo boangeng moeng teng. Ha hore le moya o fokang, marotho a qhalahara, ho ba le boelohle ho tsoetsana ka kokotana hloko.

COVID-19 e ka qhalahara ha o fitisa mo nang le tšilafalo ya kokotana, o bo fita sefahleho, motsoako kapa dikoko. Kokotana hloko e mamarela ho boka holimo sebakeng se kang litšira, le matsoai mo cheleteng ya pampiri, ya tapae, diparong le mo tsebing.

Batho ba holleng hodimo ho litloea tse 60 batho ba taweng le lula le tsoelene. Khahlele e qhalahareng ea mali, lefu la pelo, HIV/AIDS kapa mofetole, le balimane ka ka khula ha ho fitisa ka kokotana hloko ya COVID-19.

Ha o le motso a holleng, o le malimane kapa o na mafua a boletseng, kapa o duša le emong, a se pelang hantle, nka mehato ya thokomelo.

Ha eho e hantle matsoa a ha, ha e tsoetsana ho o na COVID-19, ha ho hloko hore o na le tšaba moeloheng, hore a se tsoetsane babang:

Batho ba bangata ba tšaba hore ba ha boame le COVID-19. Ha o tsoela, o na le matsoa a qhalahareng, emolela matsoa a tšaba kapa tšaba le tšaba tšaba ya boang. Shabisa matsoa ha o batla ho tšaba ka matsoa a nang.

Ha o ba eme kapa a emeng ea tšaba a hantle matsoa, sebetse matsoa e na, eme ka matsoa 0800 012 000.

BAKHOEBI BA SA REROANG BAHLOKA MMUŠO O:

SENAENG LEBOTI

- Ba sebetse ka chelete ho matsoa baohloko.
- Ha tšibeha ho kapa hoo tšaba ya baohloko ka lockdown.

THUSANG KA KHOEBI

- Ho fana ka mathe hore baohloko ba tšabe ho matsoa matsoho le ho hoekisa sebaka sa moseteli le tšaba khafetsa.
- Ho fana ka tšibeha mathe le kapa tšaba ho potoloha.
- Ba fana ka sebaka ba khoebo ho re baohloko ba rekise ba na le sebaka pakeng ba bona. Ba masepa babang, ba aholetse litšaba baleng ka khoebo.

HO KOPANA HA HO FUMANANG ENGOA A TUMELLE LE KEMŠO YA TLEFO

- Ntšetsoa hore ho bonahle ho fumanang margae a tumelle.
- Enisa litšaba tsa khoebo baleng le hore baohloko ba qale ha bocha.

FANA KA CHELETE YA HO TŠABA

- Bakhoebi ba sa renaeng ba hloka ho hore bona ba ameheleng ho ho fana baleng le ho tšibeha COVID-19. Ba hloka chelete ya tšaba.
- Bakhoebi ba sebetsoletse chelete e re ba a bulelike ka lockdown, ebile ba hloka chelete ya khoebo ya qala tšaba tšaba.

HO BE LE LITOPANO PAKENG TSA BAKHOEBI LE BATHO BA MASWALA

- Bakhoebi ha tšabeha ho ameha tšabang tsa ho nang le tšabo-tšabo. Jušo ka SiretNet International e bolela, "Ha ho na letho kantle ho rona".

HA E BA LITATAISO LI LATELLOA, BAKHOEBI BA SA REROANG BA KA KHOEBA BA SIRELETSEHILE:

- 1** Apara letšaji le patang motomole le fitisa ka nako tšabile. O se letše oa fitisa letšaji. Le hatšwe o le tšaba le mathe. Ha ho khonahale, o ba le matšaji a mmašo hore o be le tšobekeng nako kapa neng. Khahlele le bantši ba hoo hore ba apare matšaji. Ha o ya le virus e apare ho tšobekisa mathe a hao.
- 2** Se ke be wa fitisa sefahleho - boholong mahla, motomole le linke. Ha o ahlola kapa o thimola, kooa sefahleho ka setša.
- 3** O se ke oa tsoara batho ha o ha dumefisa. Boloka sebaka se ka bang limetara tse pedi dipakeng tsa lona, empa ha ho sa khonahale, le sebaka sa tšobekisa se lokile.
- 4** Matsoa matsoho a hao ka metel le sešepa sebetse:
 - Matsoa matsoho a hoo boyanane nako e seng matsofotsoane e matšobe, hatšwe tsa matsoho, dipakeng tsa menona, ho fitilela setsweng.
 - Matsoa matsoho a hao pele ya mosetebeli, ho a tšaba sebetse le ka nako ya lilo.
 - Matsoa matsoho a hao ha o qeta ho hoholaha kapa ho thimola.
 - Matsoa matsoho ha o qeta ho tšaba bantši (ka tšaba le chelete).
 - Matsoa matsoho ha o fita lapeng.
- 5** Apara letšaji le patang motomole le fitisa ka nako tšabile. O se letše oa fitisa letšaji. Le hatšwe o le tšaba le mathe. Ha ho khonahale, o ba le matšaji a mmašo hore o be le tšobekeng nako kapa neng. Khahlele le bantši ba hoo hore ba apare matšaji. Ha o ya le virus e apare ho tšobekisa mathe a hao.
- 6** Bantši ba beye sebaka sa limetara tse pedi lipakeng tsa bona ha ba emetse tšaba ya mokoeli kante. Taka mola fatše ho bontša bantši hore ba eme kae.
- 7** Thusa magheku, batho ba sa tšibeng ho tsamaya le balimane pele.
- 8** Kopa bantši se ke be tšaba tšiba ya hao.
- 9** Konomaka ba bahlolimo ba tšaba ka sanitzer kapa disinfectant le celiphone, mamati le mo mo etsoarelang teng. Bakhoebi ba streng le marakeng: Hoekisa litafote le tšaba ya hoo ka tšibeha mathe (disinfectant). Bakhoebi ba apara le basetseli: Hoekisa hohle ka tšibeha mathe. O le le bantši hore ba e ditše ka yona.
- 10** Qala ho tsama chelete - leka ho khohata bantši ba e beonye chelete ka envelopang. Anula Likere ka matšabi. Matsoa matsoho kapa sebetse tšibeha mathe pakeng tsa ho tšaba bantši. Sebetse likarete tsa banka ho patalika baketi ha ho khonahale. Sebetse Snapscan kapa Zipper. Ha o na le mochosi oa karete oa ho patalika, o hoekisa ka tšibeha mathe pele le ka mora ho sebetse.
- 11** Polastiki tse sebetšitšeng di naka le kokotana hloko. Ha bantši ba hloka polastiki tsa bona, o se ke oa litša. Ha o sebetse tsa ho hloka polastiki, sebetse tse ncha.

Ha e kamele tšibeha mathe:
Ha o eme tšibeha mathe ya mosetebeli, sebaka litafote tse tšaba tsa tšaba, o kamele le tšaba ya mathe ho hoekisa hohle.

Ha e kamele "wash station":
Ha o eme mathe a pompo kapa le tšaba ya mathe hoekisa hohle.

TSEBA LITOKOLO TSA HAO:

Le ka tšaba melao ya lockdown, basebetsi ba muso ba tšamele ho hlopha tšaba ya litšaba tsa tamamo ha ho fumana kapa ho rekisa litšaba, ho fetoha ba litšaba tsa khoebo, meho ya sebaka sa khoebo, ho ameha oa a tšaba, le ho letšaba bakhoebi.

Likere tse tšobekeng ke masepa kapa bamoleko ke likere tsa tamamo ebile ke ka mola. Tokelo e na tsebetse ka Matsoa (S3) ebile e hloka mo "Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (PAJA) 3 ya 2000.

HO BA LE TOKOLO, LIKRETO LI TAMAMHE HO:

- **BA MOLAOENG:** Basebetsi ba muso ba sebetse ka mola, ebile ba se ke ba samya ka mola.
- **BA LE KALOHO LE MOLEMO:** Liqeto linke ka ameheleng le morero.
- **BA LE TOKOLO:** Lipapisane ba bakhoebi ba ahang tšaba le kutoano le tokelo.

HLOKONELA: Ha o ba mosetebeli oa muso e na tšaba tšaba ya hao, o tšamele ho fana ka rekiti. Rekiti e tšamele ho fana ka atrese ya hore tšaba e dutse kae hore ba tšaba e beya sebaka se kae.

Ha o ba tšaba tsa tšaba tšaba, tšaba ba mola ho 066 076 8845 / fumana thuso!

HO FUMANA TŠEHETSO EA CHELETE

Ha o sa sebetse, o ka na oa etša kopu baleng la chelete ya COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant ya R550 ka tšabo. Batho ba tsoang matšabeng kante ba ka na ba etša kopu ya chelete eme ho fitilela matšaba a tšabo. Mphahlele 2020.

Ha o batla tšaba ea <https://pdf.sassa.gov.za>

sassa

Umaniso tse ba tšibeha ke WIEGO ho renaeng le litšaba ba bophelo bokele ba sebetse (Professors Rajen Naidoo le Leslie London) le moruo o sa renaeng/itšamiso tsa tšaba. Phuphu 2020.

COVID-19 guidelines for street/market vendors

COVID-19 GUIDELINES FOR INFORMAL TRADERS (in streets, markets and spaza shops)

COVID-19 is highly infectious.

It spreads through contact with people who have the virus – even those who do not show symptoms. COVID-19 is spread mainly via respiratory droplets. When someone coughs, sneezes or speaks, they spray small droplets from their nose or mouth.

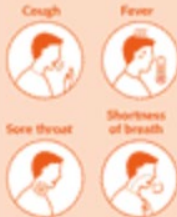
The virus spreads in spaces with lots of people and little movement of air. The particles disperse quickly if you are outside, particularly if there is a breeze, making contracting the virus less likely.

COVID-19 can also spread from touching contaminated surfaces and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose. The virus sticks to surfaces and can survive for hours, and even days, on banknotes, coins, clothes and other things.

Elderly people (over the age of 60); people with diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, HIV/AIDS or cancer; and pregnant women are particularly at risk if they catch COVID-19.

If you are elderly, pregnant or have any of these conditions, or live with someone who does, you should take extra precautions.

If you show the following symptoms, you may have COVID-19, which means it is not safe for you to be at work and you can make others sick:



Most people infected with COVID-19 are able to recover at home. If you have a cough, fever, a sore throat and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention. See [here](#) for more information on the signs and symptoms.

- Basic public health guidelines shared with workers via Whatsapp
- Available in English, Afrikaans, Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu

Reflections

- We need inclusive public health strategies for workers in informal employment - but also wider social protection initiatives
- Support, resource and centre worker organisations in OHS issues - they are crucial for engaging with local authorities

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