



# SEEN BUT NOT HEARD:

The Socio-economic Realities of  
Street Vendors in Bulawayo

RUTH CHOMOLA



SURVEY REPORT 2024

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## Executive Summary

Zimbabwe continues to record an increase in the number of people resorting to informal employment. This has been the case in most developing countries as populations try to circumvent urban poverty. Since the Economic Structural Adjustments, the nation has had a high proportion of unemployed and an increase in vending. However, pre-colonial town planning, adopted by the local authorities has failed to keep up with the informal traders and this has resulted in a discord in attempts towards inclusive town planning.

The Bulawayo Informal Sector Study, a survey undertaken by FES in partnership with the City of Bulawayo and the Bulawayo Informal Sector Working Group explores the dynamics around street vendors in Bulawayo and tables some recommendations that can be implemented by the city council to better address challenges faced within the sector. Bulawayo City Council acknowledges the contribution of the informal sector in alleviating urban poverty and therefore seeks the opportunity around the establishment of proper markets and this requires efforts towards regularization of the sector, amongst other formalities.

The study is guided by 4 main objectives around socio-economic realities, demographic profiling, attitudes towards regularization and formalization, and gender-specific needs identified by the study. Previous studies conducted by FES in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, and studies in Zimbabwe reiterate the importance of social protection in achieving decent work and the glaring gaps within the current approach in enhancing the resilience of vendors to shocks beyond their control such as health crisis amongst others.

Key findings emerging from this study demonstrate that:

- There is a high dependence on street vending for livelihood, more than 50% of the respondents have an average of 5 dependents and this then follows there is no way that the informal sector continues to be ignored in policy and programming. Street vending is a reality that is not going away soon and has stood the test of time considering how some of the respondents attested to have been selling in the streets for more than 15 years.
- Women continue to dominate the sector and represent around 64% of informal street vendors in the CBD. Men also represent 36% with the number projected to increase as unemployment continues to force them into the streets.
- Of the total number of vendors in the CBD, only 31% are licensed and this also can be attributed to the phenomenon of vendors who regularly travel for trade. In addition, there is a need to consider the plight of street vendors when coming up with licensing fees as the disparity between their monthly incomes and monthly expenses alone reflects their dependency on the trade.
- There exists a common understanding between the council and the vendors regarding the need for organized and regulated improved working conditions. There is expressed commitment to such conditions, provided the benefits are attractive. This underscores the willingness of street vendors to work with the council in creating a conducive environment for all.
- The vending sites/markets and working conditions are gender insensitive and street vendors are subjected to gender injustice including sexual harassment.

- There is a growing phenomenon of *transitory street vendors* who frequently come to Bulawayo from other parts of the country to sell their wares for short periods in the streets.
- Vendors have organized themselves into CBOs/CSOs and various social and economic solidarity groups and this reflects that they are more organized than previously assumed and are willing to unify their voice and collectively invest in their own social security opportunities.
- There is a need for continuous dialogue between the street vendors and relevant stakeholders in defining resolutions as there is a myriad of resolutions that came from the vendors captured by the study.

### **About FES**

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a German foundation that focuses on the core ideas and values of social justice and democracy – freedom, justice, and solidarity. In addition to the pursuit of political emancipation of the working class, social democracy strives towards a free society based on solidarity and offering everyone an equal opportunity for economic, social, and cultural participation.

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## Definition of terms

“**Informal trader**” is an employee considered to have informal jobs if their employment relationship is not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection of entitlement to certain employment benefits (paid annual leave, sick leave, severance pay, health insurance) (ILO, 2002).

The term “**enterprise**” refers to any unit engaged in the production of goods or services for sale or barter. It covers production units that employ hired labour, production units that are owned and operated by single individuals working on own account as self-employed persons, either alone or with the help of unpaid family members. (ILO, 2002).

“**Vendor**” means any person who sells goods from one or more fixed places in or on any public place as designated by council and should be a holder of a licence or a permit;

“**Illegal vendor**” means any person who sells goods or items without a licence or a permit.

“**Street vendor**” is a trader running their enterprise in the street and for this study specifically in Bulawayo CBD. The activities may be undertaken in identifiable premises, unidentifiable premises or without a fixed location.

“**Decent work Agenda**” is a concept that seeks to promote a more equitable economic environment where all workers are entitled to employment security, freedom, recognition and dignity. Its four objectives are employment creation, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue. (ILO, 2002).

“**Bylaws**” refers to regulations established by a local authority. These laws are limited in application to a particular district within a territory and are derived from a higher authority or primary legislation. Local by-laws play a crucial role in governing urban and rural areas as they constitute the lowest tier of the country's multilevel system of government ([https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Zimbabwe\\_2017](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Zimbabwe_2017))

“**Vendors Associations**” are organizations formed by street vendors to represent their interests, advocate for their rights, provide a platform for collective bargaining, and engage with authorities on issues affecting their trade. These associations serve as a unified voice for vendors, offering support, guidance, and representation in dealings with local authorities and other stakeholders. (<https://www.wiego.org/zimbabwe-chamber-informal-economy-associations-zciea>)

“**Bulawayo Informal Sector Working Group**” is a collaborative platform comprising representatives from informal trading communities, relevant government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. (<https://www.wiego.org/zimbabwe-chamber-informal-economy-associations-zciea>)

“**Central Business District**” means the area bounded by Masotsha Ndlovu Avenue, 15th Avenue, Lobengula Street and Samuel Parirenyatwa Street; (S.I. 181 of 2020, BCC)



## Acronyms

BCC - Bulawayo City Council

BISWG- Bulawayo Informal Sector Working Group

BUTA – Bulawayo Upcoming Traders Association

BVTA - Bulawayo Vendors and Traders Association

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

HC - Highlanders Club

ILO - International Labour Organisation

SWITA – Street Wise Informal Traders Union

ZCIEA - Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations

## 1.0 Introduction

The high levels of unemployment in Zimbabwe have pushed the majority of productive adults into informal forms of employment. At the back of increasing urban poverty, weak social protection systems, and constrained delivery of public goods, vendors are faced with vulnerability. This stems from the unregulated nature of their business and the inadequate facilities and amenities at the markets. For some of the informal workers, access to proper vending bays is a challenge; hence, they end up setting up their stalls in undesignated areas, including on the street.

While they seek to earn a livelihood from their informal trade, when conducted in undesignated sites with inadequate or non-existent social facilities and amenities, it poses a public health risk for the city. It is also a social problem in that mobility on pavements becomes constrained as they are blocked by vending stalls. Social ills and injustices like harassment, including sexual harassment, also become prevalent in such social settings.

The City of Bulawayo has an ambitious plan to improve the social and economic conditions of informal traders who are currently operating on the streets and in undesignated areas. The plan is to construct modern markets in the city to accommodate the vendors and move towards regularization and formalization. For this to be viable and sustainable, there is a need for inclusive and participatory policymaking. This means the city should have a dialogue with vendors to understand their needs, social and economic conditions, and aspirations.

This study sheds light on these considerations and informs the city's policy and practice in addressing the plight of vendors from an evidence-based approach. It also forms the basis for dialogue between the Bulawayo City Council and the informal economy associations and other stakeholders toward lasting solutions for the sector.

This study presents comprehensive and representative data to best ascertain the needs, opportunities, and gaps in the informal sector to inform urban planning in Bulawayo. It will also help inform social, economic, and viable policy options for the city. In addition, the survey aims to understand the views and attitudes of informal traders towards regularization and formalization, to guide the construction of modern markets, and to ensure that the intervention is based on informed needs assessment. Covering the following aspects:

- a. Demographic profile of street vendors
- b. Social and economic realities of street vendors
- c. The Decent Work Agenda
- d. Types and forms of businesses of street vendors in Bulawayo
- e. State of compliance, including attitudes of street vendors towards regularization and formalization (registration, licensing, and tax requirements.)
- f. Gender specific needs and challenges faced by informal traders.

Finally, the research taps into knowledge gathered in previous research and these are studies conducted by FES including a six-country opinion survey on informal labour in sub-Saharan Africa. Further, the Zimbabwean context researches the interest of Informal Labour in Trade Unions. Labour and Social Justice; ILO Recommendation 204: and the state of four pillars of the



decent work agenda in Zimbabwe influenced the study. These also helped contextualize recommendations based on FAO recommendations on the Formalization of informal trade in Africa based on trends, experiences, and socio-economic impacts and FES study of the informal economy and social vulnerability in Zimbabwe.

## Methodology

The case under study is street vendors' operation within the Bulawayo Central Business District at both designated and undesignated points. The purpose of this research is to gather views and recommendations from the street vendors themselves on the solutions that can be developed in town planning that accommodate their needs. The study appreciates the heterogeneous nature of informal traders and documents their experiences, socio-economic challenges, attitudes toward regulations, and demographic profiles. The study employs a mixed methods approach and thematic analysis of collated data.

In this study, the researcher used a simultaneous mixed methodology design specifically for its flexibility allowing the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time. This was ideal for the study objectives on the numerical count of street vendors and the collation of their views and perceptions on different issues to be addressed. This enables methodology in that it can provide complementary and contrasting sources of data that may be used as part of a strategy of triangulation.

To generate a representative sample of street vendors, the study employed Adaptive Cluster Sampling. This type of sampling is developed for populations that are clustered and, in this case, mobile or rare, this method helps with efficiently sampling Primary Sampling Units located at site mapping and ensuring the sample size determined is fully enumerated. The Secondary Sampling Units within the clusters then are randomly sampled to conduct interviews.

Research tools used included semi-structured individual questionnaires designed mainly in accordance with the research themes. The information was captured with the use of the Survey Monkey application enabling the real-time collation and analysis of responses captured by the enumerators. The enumerators were guided by the site mapping sessions that led to the identification of 9 areas with high population density that the research began from then cascading to the less populated ones. The mapping enabled the drawing of averages on population density and the identification of the sample size.

In addition, expert focus group discussions were held and focused on the attitudes about regularisation, gendered challenges faced by the vendors, and the relationship between the local authority and street vendors thus far. These also served as the opportunity to engage with the representatives of the various vendor associations in the city considering how they are mostly busy with their responsibilities at a time when there are ongoing negotiations with the council on the evictions. The final tool used is the site observation guide sought also as a method to triangulate findings from the Interviews and the FGDs.

## Limitations of the study

- The study was held on dates when the council exercise to clear illegal vendors from the CBD was initiated. This resulted in a poor representative sample, especially the 5 Ave market.

Enumerators were accused of collating data to facilitate the evictions and in some cases, this escalated to altercations thus having to leave for the safety of the enumerators.

- The study failed to represent PWD also selling in the streets mainly due to communication challenges and the unavailability of most as they avoided coming into town on the days of the decongestion exercise.

## Sample Size

Herbert Chitepo (Heads and Hooves to Toppers) (Zesa, Fortwell)	5.83%	36
Hyper and Bulawayo Centre	11.83%	73
City Hall, Max Garage	11.99%	74
6th Ave and Lobengula Street	12.64%	78
Lobengula Site 4 and extension	13.61%	84
Site 6 Lobengula street between 6th and 8th, Leopold Takawira to Herbert Chitepo	12.16%	75
Leopold Takawira, Chicken inn, Edgars, Tredgold	5.51%	34
Site 5 South and North along 6th Ave extension incl Baktas	2.59%	16
Makhosi, Highlanders, Harare Road	21.23%	131
5th Avenue (Market)	2.59%	16

*Figure 1: Sample Size & Distribution*

- The study only targeted street vendors and not in formally built-up areas like malls, or flea markets.
- Number of responses - Data collection managed to reach 437 females and 246 males with a total of 685 over 5 days (17 February 2024 - 21 February 2024). The target number of respondents for a qualified sample survey was 600.
- Focus Group Discussions - 3 were held (5 to 8 participants each) with respondents drawn from the Bulawayo Informal Sector Working Group and Bulawayo City Council.
- Site mapping and site observation where main character traits identified involved areas with high population density, proximity to ranks, soccer bet, food outlets, and public institutions. This ideally should inform the proposed markets to be established by the council to ensure the sustainability of the intervention.

## 2.0 Background and Context

In most parts of the world, a great deal of economic activity is informal. Estimates show that in the typical developing economy, about 70 percent of employment is in the informal sector, (Loayza, 2018). The recognition of the informal sector was achieved in the 1970s, through the initiatives of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the basis was appreciation of the contribution of the sector in developing country economies. This has also resulted in the development of policies that maximize on the opportunities presented by this phenomenon. According to the Research and Advocacy Unit (2015), the increase in street vending activity in Zimbabwe was a result of the implementation of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the 1990s. The aftermath declines in the economy opened the informal sector as the major source of livelihood for arguably the vast number of Zimbabwean citizens; particularly as about 90 percent of Zimbabweans became unemployed.

The exclusion of businesses that operate informally creates a bias on its own on the economic activities of a country. These are businesses that have the potential to formalize, be competitive, contribute to the tax base, and also scale up their operations. One thing that is guaranteed is how the sector grew to ensure individuals can have an income to sustain household livelihoods. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung prioritises Freedom, Equality, and Solidarity and identified a gap concerning the sector. People working in informality have less and often restricted access to public services and excluded from state social protection and are not protected by labour and social legislation (FES, 2019). The survey also collated constraints to formalization and regularisation, opportunities to provide more support (through regular work, income, and benefits) to those workers, and the decent work agenda.

Bulawayo Metropolitan in Zimbabwe`s second largest city was known for industries that have employed thousands since before independence. Urban vending has been a source of income for the urban poor and was predominantly dominated by women who had limited access to jobs in the industries. Post 2000, there was a surge in unemployed who resorted to street vending and they have occupied parts of the city CBD such as the infamous 5ave market area. The working conditions in these self-imposed areas have also not been ideal thus raising questions on hygiene, sanitation, and even an eye sore for town planning. Consequently, BCC has had the burden to try and regulate the vendors, the licensed ones have also raised concerns about the unfair competition created by the mostly unlicensed vendors. The situation at hand thus requires decision-making from an informed perspective that does not misrepresent or prejudice the needs of the parties involved. According to ZimStat's 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2023 report, informally employed persons were 86.8 percent of all employed persons in non-agric sectors.

Informal businesses may operate completely outside all or some legal channels (without a tax, business registration, or license), or they may include businesses that operate informally by non-compliant behaviour conditions (Ulyssea, 2018). Bulawayo City has continued running battles between the council and street vendors operating in undesignated places. Recent developments that also include the commissioning of the eGodini mall would have been expected to have eased the tension, and yet it persists. The study aims to gain insights into the situation from the perspectives of both the city authorities and the street vendors.

The research utilizes semi-structured questionnaires conducted by representatives of vendor associations who are part of the Bulawayo Informal Sector Working Group. This group was established to address the needs and concerns of informal traders, promote dialogue, develop solutions, and advocate for policies that support the interests of informal traders. The working group aims to improve the working conditions, livelihoods, and opportunities for informal traders through coordinated efforts and inclusive decision-making processes. The survey involves a numerical tally of vendors in locations identified by the representatives during a site mapping exercise. This exercise informs the deployment plan and provides insights into the characteristics of areas with a high density of vendors.

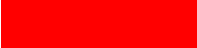
## Literature Review

Informality includes partial or full non-compliance with registration and licensing (legal informality), employment (labour informality), or tax non- or underpayment (fiscal informality) (World Bank, 2020). This survey focuses on businesses' activities that are legally informal: that is, lacking one or all of the registration or licensing requirements to operate. For this research, an important sector of workers within the informal economy is street vendors whose occupation remains the most prominent and contentious of all informal workers (Chen, 2012; Roever & Skinner, 2016). Studies have shown that street vending accounts for a large share of urban employment in developing countries and has sustained the livelihoods of the urban poor excluded from the formal system.

Trade has been part of Zimbabwean history and qualifies as an important part of the economy and conventionally been a significant source of employment for women in sub-Saharan Africa and accounts for 51 percent of all women informal workers outside agriculture (Roever & Skinner, 2016:360). However, as important as street vendors are, they have remained unrecognized, unprotected, frequently stigmatized, and viewed as a nuisance that must be eradicated by many local governments in developing countries (Potts, 2007). Findings are also supported by research held over 5 years that further contends that about half of all informally employed people are organized in a group. On average throughout the six countries, saving clubs are the most popular, followed by religious associations, neighbourhood groups, and cooperatives (FES, 2022).

Six-country research conducted on informal labour in southern Africa (Benin, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya) further explains the challenges faced by the sector that hinder progress towards decent work, violate human rights (FES, 2022). The study reveals the need for social safety nets in the case of factors beyond the vendors' control such as the COVID19 pandemic-induced poverty. The informality of the sector is also characterized by a lack of sustainability that is provided for by the provision of social security. Ideally, social security is a human right and the study attests to the existence of traditional support systems that already exist and can be maximized for more effective delivery of such in the sector (FES, 2019). This being spearheaded by the council that also seeks to formalise and regularise the sector is a viable model and is assured of sustainability.

Scholars recommend Policy and legislation approaches to formalization, Partnership-based approaches, Rights-based approaches, and, Incentives and compliance-based approaches (FAO, 2017). These have been argued to provide for a smooth transition to formalization that also benefits the street vendors. Survey findings also attest to the willingness of some vendors to be



regulated provided more information is shared, processes simplified and benefits well defined. People who work in the informal sector even show a high readiness to pay fees and taxes, if the government delivers on core demands (FES, 2020). The demand however is for ensured transparency and accountability and to limit opportunities for corruption and rent-seeking tendencies. The recommendations are based on case studies implemented in developing countries led by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (2017) and can be used individually or collated as informed by the context. In addition, Elements of good practices in facilitating the transition to formalization include flexible, effective, business-friendly regulatory systems, such as online self-help services. Partnerships with vendor associations, incentivizing, ease of access to licensing, raising awareness on all processes, and guarding against corruption.

The ILO decent work agenda seeks to ensure the promotion of jobs and enterprises, guaranteeing rights in all forms of work, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue. Furthermore, the FES prioritizes social justice and thus the vested interest in the accessibility and feasibility of achieving the decent work agenda in Bulawayo where the majority of the population has resorted to in attempts to escape urban poverty. Overall, the study concludes on the feasibility of the implementation of ILO Recommendation 204 in creating an enabling environment for transition to a formalized sector and also includes literature by FES in partnership with LEDRIZ reviewing the feasibility in the Zimbabwean context (2018). These also were raised as recommendations by the respondents and thus City Council formulating a solution along these lines would be of great service to street vendors.

### 3.0 Survey Findings

#### a. Demography of Street Vendors in Bulawayo CBD

In coming up with the number of street vendors in the CBD, the research collated numbers from site committees during site observation estimates from the working group that also was used in determining the sample size, and the estimates collated during the interviews. The collated information was then presented and averaged to at least get an estimated number to work with for planning purposes. Verification was made through the use of secondary data provided by the council based on their findings. Mean is based on all observations and it can be mathematically representative of the data.

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{x_1 + x_2 + \dots + x_n}{n}$$

The below table documents the estimated numbers, statistics from the site committees, and the mean. Much attention was given to ensuring divided statistics between the licensed and unlicensed vendors, these however were not accurately defined in 4 of the identified sites and the researcher therefore used the collated data as disaggregated below. The study concludes that approximately 5971 individuals are trading in the streets of Bulawayo. Of the number, only 1875 (31%) are licensed.

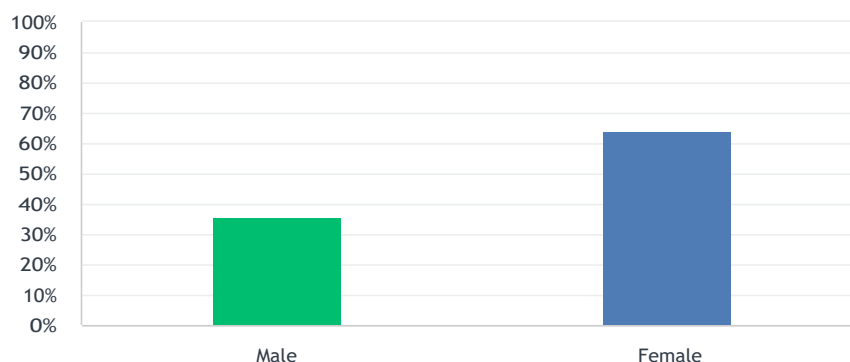
#### Street Vendor Population Matrix

Site	Est. Population (BISWG)	Est. Population (Site Committees)	Est. Population (Mean)
Herbert Chitepo (Heads & Hooves to Toppers) (ZESA, Fortwell)	250	300	275
Hyper and Bulawayo Centre, City Hall, Max Garage	300	280	290
6th Ave and Lobengula street	300	154 licensed 100 unlicensed	277
Lobengula Site 4 extension and site 4	500	428	
Site 6 Lobengula Street Between 6th and 8th, Leopold Takawira to Hebert Chitepo	700	118 licensed 350 unlicensed 368 licensed	768
Leopold Takawira, Edgars, Chicken inn, Around Tredgold	500	124 licensed 400 unlicensed	512
Site 5 South and North along 6th Ave extension inc' Baktas	800	224 licensed 400 unlicensed	723
Makhosi Site Highlanders, Harare Road	900	500 licensed 315 unlicensed	858
5th Ave (Market)	2000	908	1454

Street corners	600	287 licensed 240 unlicensed	564
Total	6850	5893	<b>5971</b>

*Table 1: Estimated Street Vendor Population*

### Gender Dynamics



*Figure 2: Gender Disaggregation*

Of the 683 respondents, 63.98% were female and 36.02% were male. The statistics attest to the high proportion of women being street vendors as compared to their male counterparts. This phenomenon also reflects findings from other studies focusing on Southern Africa. Research also has argued that trade is a significant source of employment for women in sub-Saharan Africa. Male participation in the informal economy has increased over the years and could be explained by the ongoing closure of formal companies and industries. Muchichwa (2015) argues that redundancy has forced men to compete for livelihood-earning opportunities along with marginalized women in the already congested informal economy.

### Age Distribution

**Q21 How old are you?**

**Q22 How long have you been a vendor?**

Some vendors gain interest in vending from a young age when accompanying parents to vending sites. Some either drop school or inherit vending from their parents. A good number of vendors dropped out of school at Form 2 and have been on the streets for years. From the respondents, the majority are between the ages 26-35 (35%) and 36 – 50 (43%) and for 25 years and below 12%. The statistics below show how long the respondents have been vendors and on its own this reveals the need for a sustainable solution to the informal trade. Considering the trade being passed on from generation and the first vending bays established in 1994, continuity also assures the desire for growth that was expressed by respondents. They expressed the desire to formalize and own their own business with the capacity to employ more people in the future.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-2 years	21.77%	135
3-8 years	40.32%	250
9-15 years	23.71%	147
15years plus	14.19%	88

Figure 3: Period in the informal sector

**b. Social and economic realities of street vendors**

**Formal Employment History**

Q11 When last have you been formally employed?

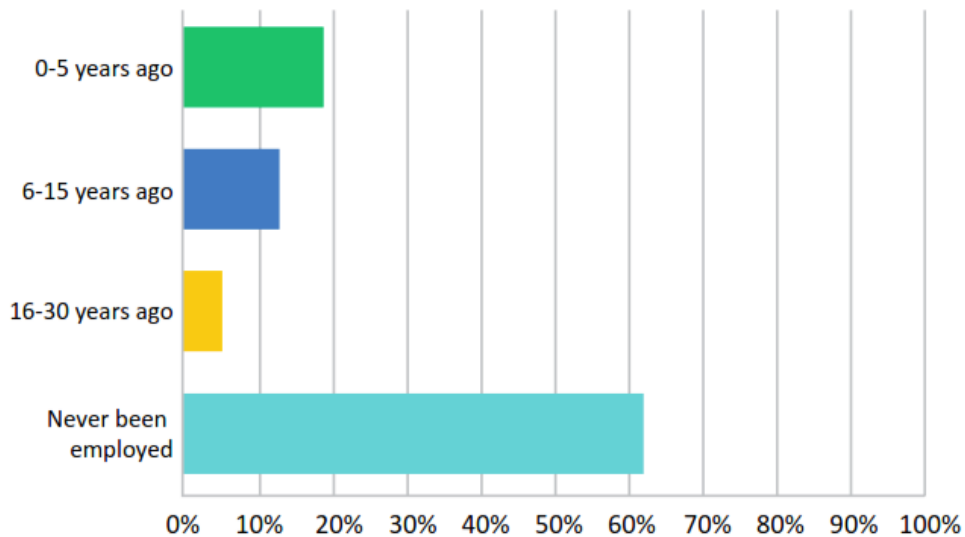


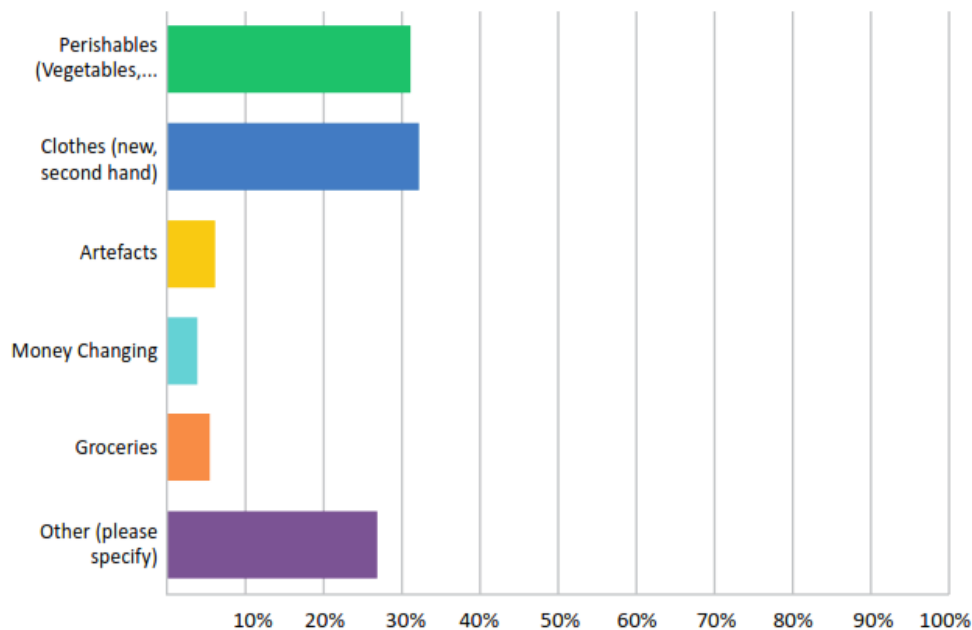
Figure 4: Formal Employment History

Survey findings reveal that more than 60% of the street have never been formally employed. The majority of these are females with a steady increase in those not employed from 1 to 15 years ago. The increase therefore equates to how unemployment has affected both males and females and this also is the reality of the country statistics where the last Zimstats survey (2023) revealed how more than 80% of the population is unemployed. This juxtaposed with the number of dependants who are surviving on street vending further reveals the role played by informal trade in attempts towards eradicating poverty. 50% of the respondents have 4 - 7 dependants, 32% in the 1-3 range, and 16% have 8 and above. All these depend on the income from vending.

**Types of business**

Q16 What is the main activity, (product/service) of your business?





*Figure 5: Type of Business*

Perishables and clothing make up 32% each, followed by other categories such as school wear, drinks, mahewu, airtime, alcohol, sweets, batteries, phone chargers, and miscellaneous items. Money changing constitutes 3.96%, groceries 5.71%, and artifacts 6.34% of the distribution. Among the diverse trades, 41% need daily restocking, particularly for perishable goods. 25% restock weekly, 19.45% fortnightly, and 11% quarterly, mainly for those dealing with non-perishable items. This diversity in trading patterns indicates the viability of businesses and explains the growth in numbers and the selection of trade locations.

The peak business hours for the majority of vendors are between 16:00 and 20:00. Due to the council's ongoing raids, many vendors prefer to set up their stalls during this time. Focus group discussions with the council highlighted this as a significant challenge in enforcing regulations. The lengthy waiting list and concerns about favouritism in stand allocation were also raised during interviews. Vendors typically begin selling their goods after the city council's working hours in the evenings, posing challenges for regulatory enforcement. Traditional vendors who have been in the street for decades struggle to accept change or any policy implementation whereas the city constantly has to evolve to develop and accommodate population growth.

### Monthly Income and Profit

Q26 What is your average monthly profit?

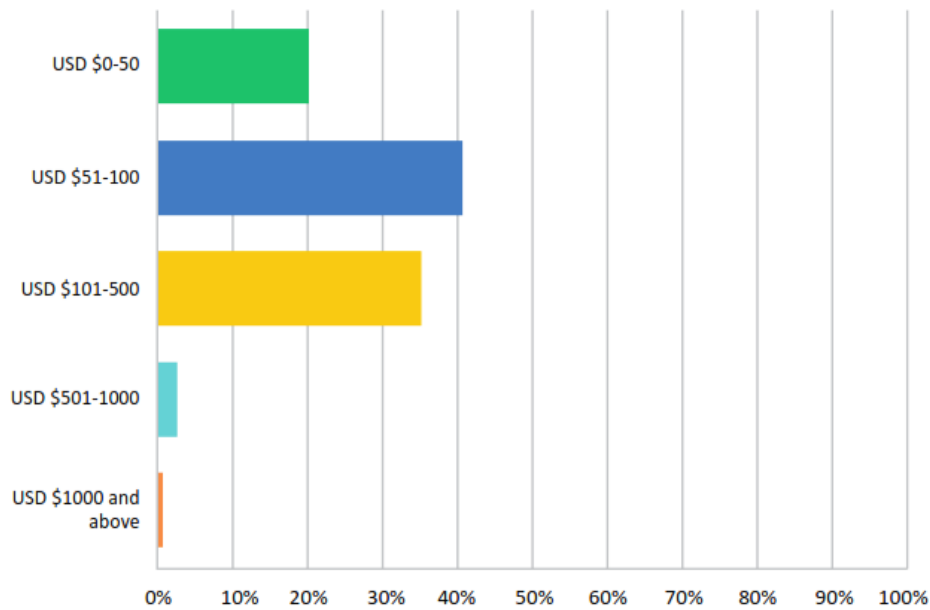


Figure 6: Average monthly profit

**Q8 What is your average monthly household expenditure?**

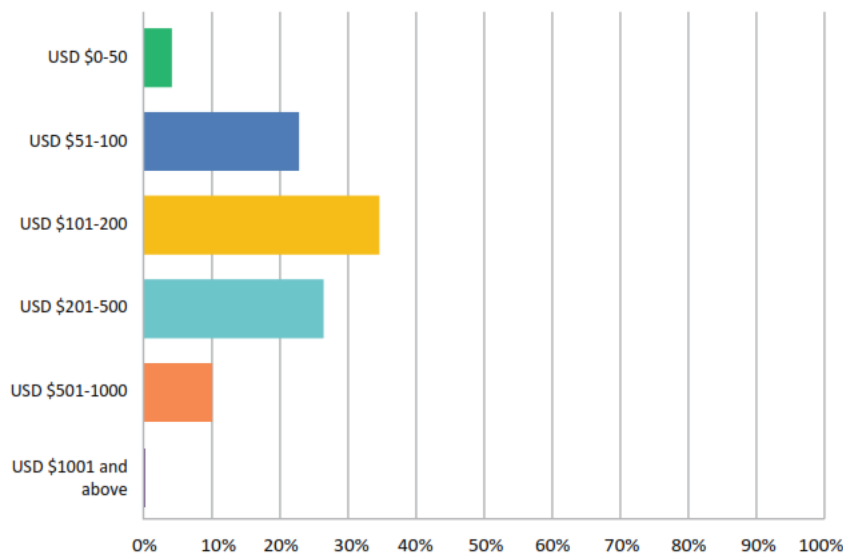


Figure 7: Average Household Expenditure

The survey highlighted the disparity between the monthly household expenses and the estimated profits from street vending. This information is crucial for understanding the financial gap filled by street vendors and provides insights into their ability to afford regularization fees if they choose to do so. Additionally, this data assists the council in determining the most effective approach to enhance household livelihoods. Notably, many businesses require as little as \$50 to start, making it a viable option for the urban poor.

*An inspiring success story is that of a woman selling Mahewu, water, and drinks. She shared that she could cover a \$400 fee and raise \$600 for her son's football academy.*

## Financial Literacy

Q27 What type of records do you keep for this business?

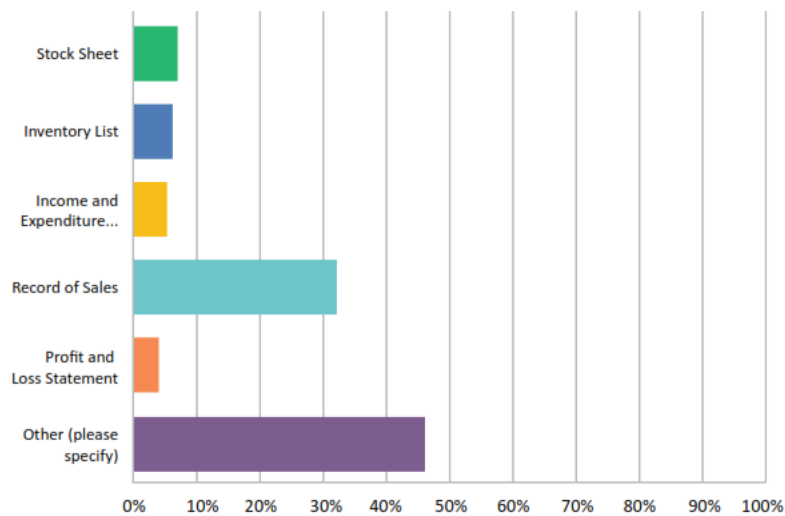


Figure 8: Types of Records kept

The International Labour Organisation defined the sector as “private unincorporated enterprises by individual and households which are not legal entities separated from their owners and with no record keeping to their operations and accounts” (ILO, 1972). However, this is not the case with most as they can trace their accounts and thus provide such in the event of applying for loan facilities. The majority produced counter books that recorded daily sales with some however having no such as mainly the money is for immediate sustenance. There is a need for better organized record keeping, training on savings, and creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. This also leads to a major pillar of decent work defined as social protection, in case of injury, how best to cushion the dependants.

### c. The Decent Work Agenda

Q21 What Type of premises do you conduct the informal trade activity?

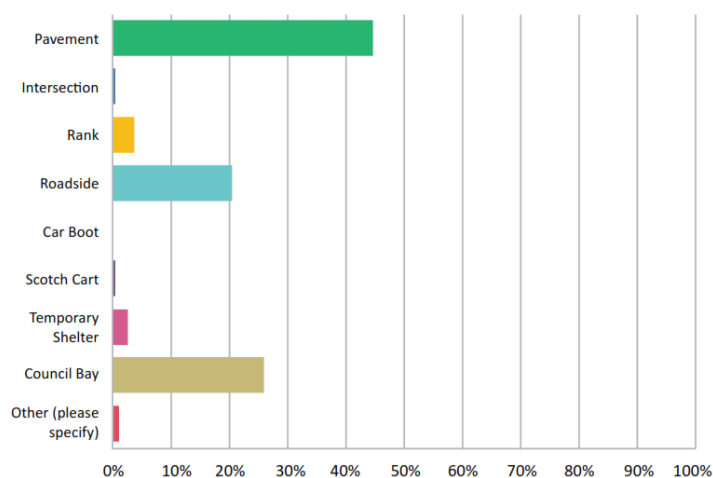


Figure 9: Premises on which business is conducted

Local governance and urban planning have been oriented in a punitive way with regard to the informal economy. Scholars such as Chen & Beard (2018) argue that the literature identifies that the construction of malls and town-house complexes often displaces informal workers such as street vendors from their desirable places of work to unattractive areas. Conversations around their preferred areas revealed how business thrives where there is high population density and traffic. Examples of such are descriptions of the major sites where the main characteristics are proximity to ranks (including illegal ones), Food outlets, and Betting Shops and this is also part of the reason why they have shunned the new eGodini project as it is far away from potential customers.

A case in point is the grievances aired by the licensed vendors at Highlanders Club. The majority of licensed vendors at Highlanders expressed their struggle to afford license fees due to minimal daily sales caused by low foot traffic. The strategic positioning of street vendors should also inform the limitations and opportunities the council has in decongesting the CBD. Of the respondents 44, 7% are situated on pavements, 25% on council bays, 20% on the roadside, 3% at ranks, and some would rather be mobile. for some. A comparison with unlicensed traders on 5th Avenue underscores the need for proper placement, the type of wares that are dominant in a particular area, and also the peak times for such.

#### Q19 Who allocated the space to you?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bulawayo City Council	38.06%	236
Site Committee	0.97%	6
Space baron	0.81%	5
Self	59.03%	366
Political party	0.32%	2
I do not know	0.81%	5
TOTAL		620

*Figure 10: How space was acquired*

The above shows that the spaces the vendors operate are mostly self-allocated. Approximately 30% of the street vendors' population is allocated by the council. The proposal to create spaces for vendors is a welcome appreciation of the socio-economic landscape of the country. Lobengula Street vendors have expressed concerns about policy inconsistencies and town planning chaos. Before the closure of Egodini 6th Ave vending area, which was designated for Kombis, vendors were allocated bays and this worked well since the area was located at the main rank for people going to high-density areas. Over 60% of respondents mentioned that municipal police collect a daily fee of R10 or USD 1 to avoid being arrested or evicted as illegal vendors. Some reported that council bays cost \$11.50, while the remaining respondents did not pay anything for the space to the council. These findings reveal that the space barons terrorizing vendors include corrupt law enforcement agencies and not only individuals as the initial design had assumed.

Most illegal vendors who have 8year+ and 20 years of selling history pleaded with the local authority to at least not move them but collect revenue daily or monthly. A plan produced by the

Director of Engineering Services is used which shows the bay, space, or stand sizes to mark the areas where traders are to be accommodated. The marking is done by the Director of Engineering Services using a yellow print or pegs with an inscription of a visible bay, space, or stand number visible on one where appropriate. Trading is only allowed on the marked bays, spaces, or stands in areas that shall be designated. Chen & Beard (2018) argue that a challenge exists in that informal market traders and street vendors are not accessing any benefits from paying these operating fees and taxes. If these misconceptions continue to be perpetuated by critics of informal employment, it could mean that policymakers and government officials will continue to have a negative perception of the informal economy. This could work against any attempts to promote decent work in the informal economy.

## Social Security

Q43 Which of the following do you have access to?

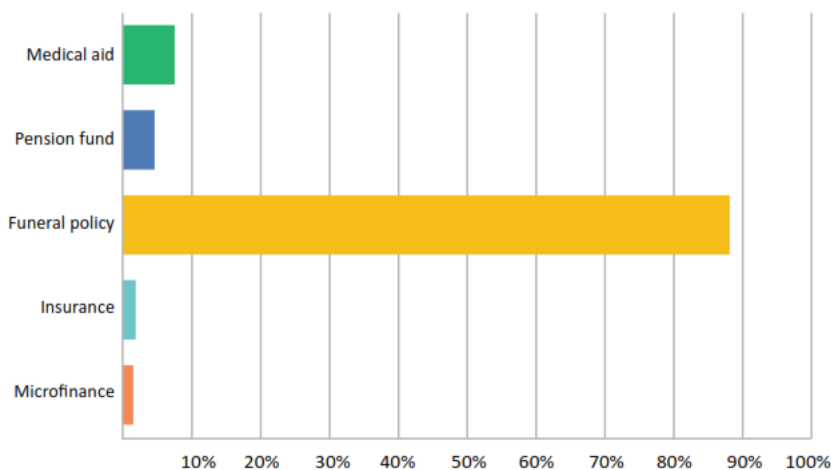


Figure 11: Types of Social Security Schemes

Secondly, informal employment refers to all employment that is not covered through social protection, both within and outside the informal sector (ILO, 2003; Chen, 2018). However, the sustainable livelihoods approach notes that a sustainable livelihood can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base (FES, 2018). The sustainable livelihoods approach is an approach that aims to proffer comprehensive solutions to eradicating poverty and sadly from the respondents, 282 out of 685 responded to this question. From the 282 access to pension funds, insurance, and medical aid is less than 10%. This presents an opportunity for the city fathers to come up with a model that provides such services and ensures some form of social protection. More than 83% of the respondents do not own the housing they are living in and this is an opportunity for intervention by possible interventions interacting with them and setting up housing schemes, or even cooperatives for the target group.

#### Q44 Which social solidarity groups are you part of?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
ISALs	13.93%	50
Burial Society	12.53%	45
Money clubs	54.32%	195
Grocery clubs	19.22%	69

Figure 12: Membership in Social and Economic Solidarity Groups

Interestingly to note, as part of organizing themselves, the street vendors have established social solidarity savings clubs to try and cushion themselves in times of need. A good example is how Income Savings and Lending schemes, Burial societies, and money and grocery clubs are common and have also been attributed to some of the success stories within the fraternity. Informality has been misinterpreted to mean disorder, yet the reality of this assumption is the opposite. It is imperative to note the gap in relation to conversations around health insurance. According to a study by FES (2022), there is a high demand for health support that cuts across the Southern Africa region and an opportunity for different actors beyond just government entities. This is an opportunity for the council to develop such incentives to attract registration and ensure that there is equitable access to health for the vendors and their dependants.

#### Street Vendor Groups

#### Q39 How are informal traders organized?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Site Committees	73.52%	186
Association	23.72%	60
ISALs	2.77%	7

Figure 13: Informal Sector Organising

The informal economy functions in an orderly fashion and has its own set of rules, arrangements, and institutions which when merged together form its own political economy (ILO, 2002). The only misinterpretation is that informal workers operate on the periphery of the law, but this does not mean that they do not abide by and follow the regulations of the state (ILO, 2002; WIEGO, 2015).

#### Q40 Do you belong to any association?

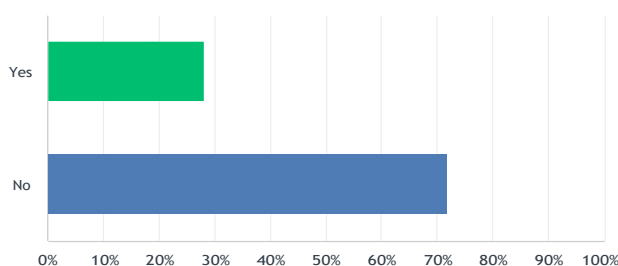


Figure 14: Membership to an Informal Traders Association

FGD conversations appreciated the establishment of informal traders' associations has bridged the communication gap between vendors and the local authority. Most vendors under these associations are well represented and their grievances are made known to the local authority through the associations as most communication is carried out between the two. This has also made it easy for the council to regulate licensed street vendors. It is disheartening to note the low number of vendors these represent considering the ongoing conversations held with Council in a bid to ensure improved working conditions for the informal traders. 74% of the respondents attested to not being part of any association. The general consensus held on associations and their role as revealed by the study by BVTA (2021) is however limited by their deliberate exclusion of unlicensed vendors yet they make up the majority of street vendors in Bulawayo CBD.

Contemporary research in countries such as Ghana and Nigeria has suggested that if the state dialogues with informal workers through their respective associations, they are more likely to pay their taxes (Joshi & Ayee, 2002; Meagher, 2013). However, membership amongst those unlicensed is not popular. During one of the altercations with some vendors on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, the vendors feigned ignorance to the associations representing them and rather chose to align with a political party. Another issue that was highlighted was that some men ask for sexual favors when they ask to join Associations so they would rather remain as illegal vendors. This may be an opportunity for intervention to better organize a dialogue between the vendors and the authorities.

Research by FES also explores the opportunities for trade unions to represent the informal worker grievances in the current setting where the majority of the population is informal. While the organizational debate on the future of trade unionism is active in trade union circles, informal employment as a potential recruitment field for trade unions has largely been ignored by empirical research (Traub-Mez, 2020). Trade unions are an avenue for ensuring social dialogue and the incorporation of individuals who have no interest in joining the already available associations.

## Relations with formal businesses

### Q47 Describe your interactions with the formal business community

First, informal trade is prevalent and may draw resources from and compete with the formalized business sector (this has been categorized as the 'parasitic view'). Understanding the estimates and nature of informal sector businesses informs policy, particularly considering the absence of consistently effective policies to address informality, e.g., the limited success of formalization efforts (see Bruhn and McKenzie, 2014; Floridi et al 2020). Below is a comment by one of the formal businesses during site observation that is forced to co-exist with street vendors and compete for business with them.

*"It is appreciated that our economy is depressed and pushed many to vending but the vendor issue needs council to go back to the basics and enforce the available legislation. We have turned into an unstructured flea market Bazaar and this is not acceptable"*

This competition also serves the interests of the customers as Street vendors tend to undercut shop owners' prices to serve cash-strapped customers. In some cases, formal shop owners try

to get street vendors evicted from the pavements in front of their shops, but because the ‘competitors’ earn a living from street vending activities, they resist eviction.

#### Q29 Are you at the same location all day?

Relations with licensed vendors are different, a visit to the Highlanders CIUC site. 93% of the vendors are at the same location all day and therefore do not have the privilege to move shop as and when convenient as compared to the unlicensed. Licensed vendors cry foul over low or no sales at all as they face stiff competition from unregistered shops, Chinese shops, and those operating illegally at 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Failure to pay for the license upon expiry also prompts eviction, and when the worth of renewing is not clear, then it is easier to resort to illegal street vending. Shop owners and street vendors work together as they assist each other in giving them change, offer pay toilet facilities from their shops and sometimes when the city council comes for constant raids, they give them a place to hide. However, some also pay municipal police to come and raid the street vendors, some of the shop owners are collecting payments for the spaces by shops so now there also exists bribing between the two.

#### d. State of compliance, regularization, and formalization

#### Q49 How much do you know about regularising/formalizing your trade?

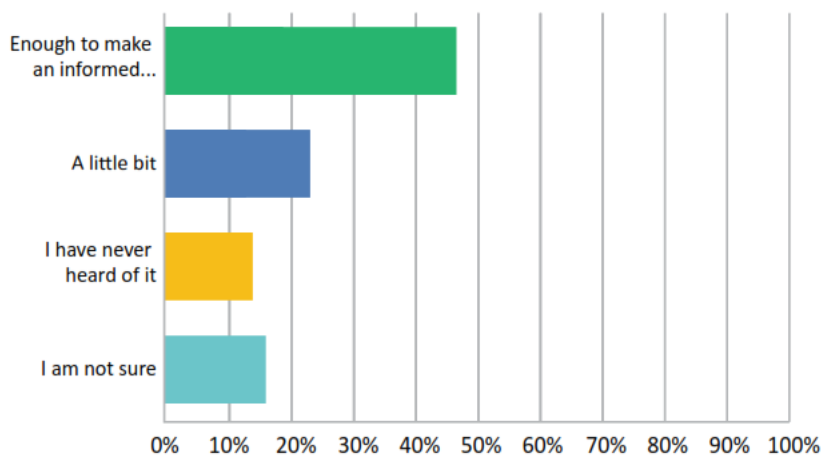


Figure 15: Level of knowledge relating to regularisation

The survey found that 46.98% of 562 respondents have enough information to decide whether to regulate or not and most attributed the cumbersome processes around registration as the main deterrent. 125 skipped the question and added to the ones who had never heard of it signals a lack of information. Considering that businesses operating informally are frequently small and less productive, but widely abundant, and should imply that the typical (modal) business often does not appear in official registrar records, tax rolls, or most often, both. In turn, descriptions of the characteristics of many economies will be lacking information on a sector that is a ubiquitous source of jobs and business activity. Information dissemination, through the associations for starters, is one opportunity. The probability of regularisation, when proper incentives are communicated is high, especially for the resident street vendors.



### Q10 What is your City /Town/Country of origin

However, another pertinent issue revealed by the study is the geographical coverage/ representation and diversity of the existence of street vendors. Of the 607 (40 skipped) respondents, only 214 (78 males, 136 females) hail from Bulawayo and areas surrounding such as Fort Rixon, Matobo, Inyathi, and Nyamandlovu. Plumtree. 63% come from areas as far as Harare, Masvingo, Mutoko, Gokwe, Lupane, Gweru, and Gwanda some were from parts of the country as far as Buhera. They mainly sell second-hand clothes, exotic fruits, gadgets, and perishables. Site observations also revealed that some set up for the night in the streets and do not have any form of accommodation. This means either traveling to the city for vending on specific days or renting within Bulawayo.

### Q13 Do you own the residence?

On residence ownership, 83,2% of the respondents said `NO`. Most of the respondents also live in Bulawayo`s high-density areas such as Nkulumane, Makokoba, Mzilikazi, Entumbane, Emganwini, Cowdray Park, Sizinda, Gwabalanda, Lobengula, Emakhandeni and with less than 5% in low-density areas mainly Parklands, Queenspark and Hillside. This presents an opportunity to also encourage the use of local markets in those areas to decongest the city.

The study recommends a form of licensing that takes into account the diversity around transitory street vendors. In addition, there is a need to come up with by-laws around non-residents who travel solely for trade. The city by-laws, noted by the exert below, enable the council to design trade areas with the same concept as the peoples` market with specific days and this coupled with a temporary permit (applicable only on the stipulated days) could be a possible solution.

*SI 181 2020 5(2) The council may, by notice erected at any place or stand in any area specified in the First Schedule, authorize vendors, subject to the condition or restrictions imposed upon the license in terms of which they are authorized to carry on their business, to carry on such business in such business in such places or stands on such days and during such hours and in respect of such goods as may be specified in the notice.*

Furthermore, in accordance with the by-laws on permitted products to be sold, there is a clause on opportunity for the review and inclusion or exclusion of some products, and therefore that should also govern the type of products in these markets to enable fair competition amongst traders and prioritize the well-being of consumers.

### Q45 Describe your interactions with the City Council

The relationship between unlicensed vendors and the local authority is dysfunctional, this is seen in the 'cat-and-mouse' nature of their interactions where the local authority is constantly attempting to remove unlicensed street vendors from the streets where they will be unlawfully running their businesses, vendors' goods are confiscated and often lost, damaged or stolen in transit to Drill Hall. Police are sometimes brutal and rough when dealing with street vendors, vendors have to sometimes bribe the police to keep their businesses safe from extortion and theft by the same authorities.

*8. The Council may set aside land or premises for the purpose of people's markets and may divide such land or premises into separate stands, stalls or tables, as the case may be.*

*Application for bay, stall or table in a people's market*

9. (1) *any person wishing to use a bay, table or stall in a people's market shall apply to a designated officer for a license.*

The study applauds current developments by the council enabled by the continued engagement with the vendors' working group and shows commitment towards decent work. 5ave market will be legalized and 600 bays to be established. In addition, plans towards developing the Baktas area to accommodate 700 more bays will go a long way in accommodating some of the needs of street vendors. These areas will need to be proper establishments and have proper sanitation facilities, access to water, and security. This is the fulfillment of the mandate given to the council by the S.I. that governs the sector. The recommendation given by respondents in being regularised includes easing the backlog on the vendors' waiting list and also decentralizing the process for ease of access. Ideally after application and payment of the fees, the designated officer shall allocate to the applicant a bay, stall, or table, as the case may be, and shall issue him with a license that clearly defines the area of the bay, stall, or table and state the name of the license holder.

Regular patrols on sites where unrecognized street vendors sell their products are done to reduce the number of street vendors. The council often confiscates goods from illegal vendors selling on the streets and requires a fine to be paid, this is in a bid to stop the vendors from selling their products on the street. The process however is also marred with corruption as revealed by how vendors attest to never recovering their goods even after they have paid the fines. The municipality alleges the confiscated goods are surrendered to the police who in turn should be the custodians. The sad reality is wares are lost and no one is accountable for them. Stiff penalties and fines are paid for littering, a fine of \$30 USD is required by the city council for littering, EMA also requires a fine of \$500 USD for littering or 5 years jail time. The use of committees and working groups to run sites has also lightened the load of regulating vendors from the council. Invitations of vendors for dialogues between the city council and working groups so that they can have a say in budgets and regulations concerning how they can operate within the city.

**Q45 Describe your interactions with the City Council.**

An analysis of the responses in relation to the relationship between street vendors and the municipality reflects a glaring gap in the regulations surrounding street vending, and the need to extensively raise awareness on BCC S. l. 181 of 2020 that governs the sector.

*“We do not get along, they abuse us and collect our money through bribes, after that they raid us and expect 90USD a month”*

*“Sometimes they sympathise with us and tell us to relax they are just passing by”*

*“When we pay on time, we have no problem with them”*

These sentiments were also conveyed when most respondents mentioned that one of the benefits of being regularised will be to trade in peace and not be chased by municipal police. The other challenge raised on licensing was the confiscation of goods that are not listed on the license. According to the S.I. there exists restrictions and conditions of license or permit and the

council may, in issuing or renewing a license, restrict the applicant to dealing in goods listed in his or her application; Ideally, this is good to ensure order and yet the vendors cited how sometimes they need to adapt to what sells at the time for them to sustain their businesses.

## State of Compliance

Q17 What is the legal status of your business?

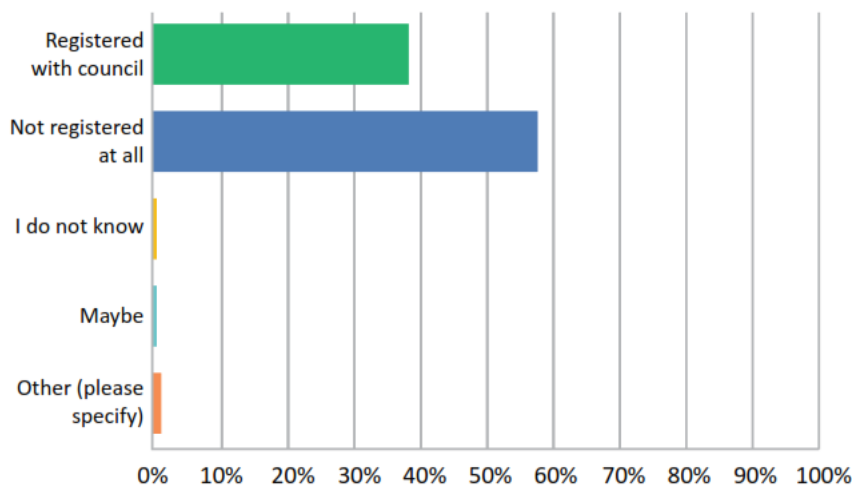


Figure 16: Legal status of business

Q49 How much do you know about regularising/formalizing your trade?

Of the respondents, 38,6% attested to having been registered with the council, and a whopping 58% are not registered at all. The remaining responses showed little understanding of what regularisation is all about and some simply said they did not know. The follow-up question on how much is known about the licensing process, 44% of respondents listed paying at the council and the requirements include having proper papers also buttressed the lack of knowledge. The main requirements known by the few also include getting fingerprints from the police. They speculated about how they would need to bribe throughout the process and assumed this would also be a time-consuming process.

*“I know I have to get registered”*

*“I applied for it, got my finger prints done and they processed for me”*

*“You have to have a good relationship with the people and have proper documents, so when I have money, I will get my chairperson to help me”*

*“When I find time and the money for the papers, I will start the registration”*

According to the legislation, 7. An application for stall or table holders, hawkers or vendor’s licence shall be made to the council, and shall Be in the form prescribed in the Second Schedule and accompanied by the appropriate fee; Two recent identical passport size photos and a valid Medical Certificate of Health in the case of an applicant who wishes to sell food.

The researcher noted how such were requirements for the 1976 colonial by-laws and as such there is a need to properly communicate the simplified new one. An opportunity that BCC can make use of is the Site associations, some respondents alluded to how they were assisted by their chairpersons to get a license.

### Expectations after licensing

#### Q50 If you were to be regularised, what would you expect in return?

Licensed street vendors proposed that the council lease the allocated land to them so that they can develop it to meet their needs. A case in point is the access to sanitation facilities and water. This also included shades as some of the allocated areas are just yellow lines drawn by the council. For the unlicensed vendors, there was an expectation of having access to loan facilities, consultations in decision-making, and affordability of vending bays informed by how the business is performing.

*“To be given affordable stands to sell, we cannot afford the eGodini ones”*

*“To be allocated bays within the CBD and licenses that also consider that we have slow months and no money”*

*“Financial assistance and access to affordable loans”*

When asked how they see their businesses in the next 2 years 56% had the desire to grow into viable sustainable businesses and be able to improve their livelihoods. Site committee members interviewed during site observation also reiterated on the untapped opportunities for growth and the willingness of members to commit to a system that protects their interests.

### Gender specific needs and challenges faced by informal traders.

During city council raids, both men and women are treated alike without consideration for gender-specific circumstances such as the presence of children. This lack of differentiation has led to distressing incidents, including a woman being hurt while being chased, and a child being mistakenly taken and placed into a vehicle with merchandise due to inadequate attention to their presence.

#### Q35 Are there any toilets available for your use?

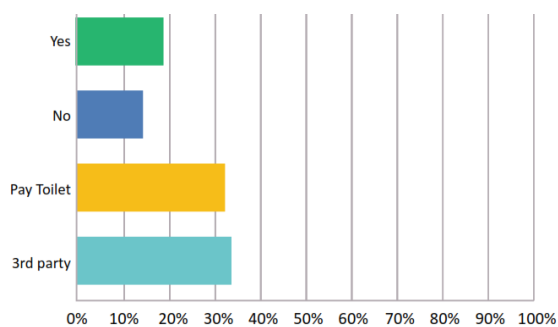


Figure 17: Availability of toilet facilities

### Q15 What facilities are available for children?

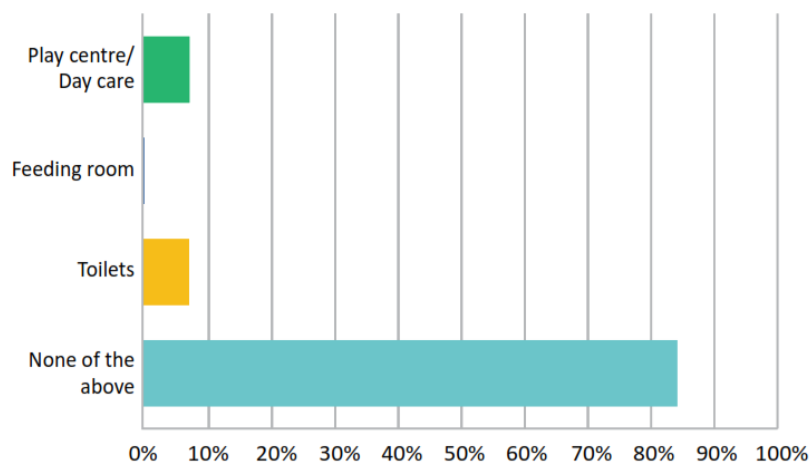


Figure 18: Availability of facilities for children

During the interviews, at 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, Municipal police with no uniforms and an unbranded truck confiscated ware, and in an attempt to run away a young mum dropped her child. This is the reality for women in street vending and the glaring need for gender-sensitive solutions by the municipality in consideration of the new vending sites proposed. For the 11% of women who said they come with their children to work and the 10% who sometimes do so, it is a recommendation for town planning to include this component in planning for future market structures. The reality is they have no option but to bring the children with them and cannot afford daycare costs, or babysitter costs thus have to bring them to the streets.

The current lack of adequate toilet facilities especially affects women, as they are not provided with necessary sanitation services and facilities for changing babies and disposing of nappies and pads. The existing toilets are not designed to cater to the specific needs of women, leading to inconvenience and discomfort. Additionally, the an insufficient number of toilets (1:15 per seat and 1:25 for the total population of 700 people), hence making it difficult for everyone to access proper facilities. Women generally have also been exposed to different forms of sexual harassment, from inappropriate hand-holding during raids, to requests for sexual favors to avoid being raided. Another one noted during site observation also included vile comments and slurs from fellow vendors and municipal police. Some of these interactions have been normalized to the extent that such violations often go without any form of recourse.

### Unexpected findings

- 74% of street vendors are not part of the associations expected to represent them and there is a need for Associations to deliberately target street vendors (Both licensed and unlicensed) to better facilitate dialogue between the council and the vendors.
- Only 31% of the vendors are licensed with council and 56% of the unregistered expressed no knowledge of the licensing process.

## 4.0 Recommendations

The purpose of this survey was to identify the requirements, prospects, and deficiencies for the Bulawayo City Council's urban planning efforts related to the informal sector. The survey sought to provide insights into social, economic, and viable policy opportunities that can help enhance livelihoods, sanitation, and support of informal traders. The traders in question are currently operating in unauthorized areas, leading to various human rights violations and health risks. For the purposes of this survey, the focus was on street vendors operating on open-air, makeshift structures in the Bulawayo Central Business District. The council proposal involves constructing modern markets in the city to accommodate the vendors and gather their perspectives and attitudes towards regularization and formalization.

Firstly, there is a need to address the existing negative impact that informal trade is causing on licensed and formal businesses (unfair competition). In addition, impacts informal businesses themselves (the inability to benefit from significant growth opportunities accessible only by formal businesses such as credit facilities). Customers are also not guaranteed that health and safety standards have been followed and the local authority not maximising on revenue potential posed by the sector. Secondly, the option of abrasive eradication also witnessed during the study period, of informal traders is also not a feasible option and is equally unacceptable because part of the reasons for the growth of street vendors results from dysfunctional economic policies (ESAP), poor governance few opportunities for the vast population in formal business in the first place.

Informal economic activity is the entrepreneurship culture that if nurtured will provide benefits provided the policies and proposed solutions ensure improved working conditions and regularisation of the sector in a manner that addresses the challenges aforementioned. In conclusion, formalization and regularisation are a feasible solution that the BCC needs to explore.

- **Legislation alignment in response to transitory vendors**

1. **Raise awareness on, review, and update local authority by-laws for better compliance** with specific reference to **Section 7 of S.I. 180 of 2020** on applications for stall and table holders, hawkers, vendor's licenses, or flea markets. **Section 11** on Applications for stall/table holders, hawker's vendor, or flea market employer's licenses and **Section 25** on offenses and penalties also consider the introduction of severe spot fines.
2. **Review and align by-laws with the current environment**, for example, the issue of transitory vendors. This will mean coming up with a definitive term for them, designing a temporary permit that best accommodates their mobility traits, and setting up a market with specific business days for them.

- **Adaptation to new technologies**

3. **Utilize new technologies to improve access** to licensing and compliance services to minimize corruption and rent-seeking practices. These should be accessible on

platforms such as the council website, ticketing kiosks established around the city, and WhatsApp Bots, amongst other virtual platforms that can be explored.

- **Strengthened Communication**

4. **Establish clear and standardized communication channels** with street vendors, ensuring opportunities for regularization are well-defined. Communicate updates to the by-laws effectively to ensure vendors are informed and compliant with the revised regulations. Communication will serve as a monitoring measure through enhanced transparency, accountability

- **Formalization Strategy and Policy**

5. **Develop a formalization strategy for the City of Bulawayo** to support and guide the transition from informal to formal economy guided by the ILO Recommendation R204. It is important for the transition mechanism to be as less complicated, accessible, and attractive as possible, and the benefits of formality should be worthwhile to pursue (FES, 2018).

- **Development of Markets**

6. **Explore leasing informal markets to associations** to provide vendors with a sense of ownership, enabling them to build or make improvements to their markets. A case in point is the Nkulumane Vegetable Wholesale Market established by the BVTA as best practice. This recommendation arises in response to councils' incapacity to maintain the established vending bays.
7. **Invest in developing state-of-the-art markets** and refurbishing licensed bays, providing more sanitation facilities, access to water, and enhanced security that can attract more vendors to regularize. In addition, the **establishment of facilities for children** who have to go to the streets with their parents should be considered.
8. **Introduce mixed markets** that incorporate formal businesses like fast food outlets, sports betting, and public transport ranks where vendors and human traffic can converge. This will enable the council to provide affordable vending bays offset by bigger businesses. These would go a long way in decongesting the streets as they directly address the pull factors that have encouraged street vending at certain sites.

- **Maximize Relations with vendor associations**

9. Consider **utilizing the established vendor associations to facilitate the licensing** process, use local housing offices spread across the city's residential areas, and empower traders to participate in decision-making processes. This will ensure ease of access to the service, less time spent on the waiting list, and ease the pressure on the personnel responsible for such within the council.

- **City policy on sexual harassment**

10. **Facilitate conversations around the protection of all women vendors against sexual harassment.** Develop an anti-sexual harassment policy for the city which applies to public spaces and set up proper reporting structures for such.

- **Transparency and accountability**

11. **Strengthen transparency and accountability,** act against corruption happening with confiscated goods, and ensure a paper trail in handing confiscated goods to the ZRP by municipal police. **Law enforcers also need to be trained** on human rights to stop harassment of vendors, and also be capacitated on communication and conflict resolution.

12. **Strengthen implementation of by-laws** by introducing punitive spot fines to deter vendors from setting up in undesignated areas.



## 5.0 Conclusion

The majority of street vendors highly depend on vending as their main source of income to fend for an average of 5 dependents. Street vending is a reality that is not going away soon and has stood the test of time considering how some of the respondents attested to have been selling in the streets for more than 15 years. With women continuing to dominate the sector, representing around 64% of informal street vendors in the CBD there is need for the city to pursue a feminist informal sector policy to cater for the unique needs of women in public urban spaces.

The outcomes of this survey give an important insight for evidence-based policy and planning in the City of Bulawayo. They could also be potentially transferable to other cities as issues relating to the socio-economic realities of street vendors bear commonalities from one city to the next except for a few context-specific nuances.

The shared understanding between the council and the vendors regarding the need to be organized and regulated is a good pedestal for improved working conditions and better relations between the two actors. This underscores the willingness of street vendors to work with the council in creating a conducive environment for all. As the survey findings indicate that the informal trading sector in Bulawayo's Central Business District (CBD) has significant negative impacts on formal businesses, and informal traders themselves, the survey can serve as a basis for informed dialogue amongst these key stakeholders.

The council's proposal to construct modern markets is a feasible solution to address these challenges. However, it is crucial to incentivize street vendors and ensure their regularization and formalization in a manner that addresses the existing challenges and promotes improved working conditions. This approach aligns with the decent work agenda and pro-poor policies to regularize the sector while assuring security, social protection, and benefits for the vendors.

At the moment, all these noble proposals are hampered by the poor representation of street vendors, with the majority not represented by any association which may result in their exclusion in policy discourses in the city. This means there is a need for robust informal sector organizing, the capacitation of informal sector associations, and the creation of an inclusive dialogue platform for the meaningful representation of street vendors.

To develop the broader informal sector in Bulawayo, there is a need for a city informal sector strategy to guide the transition and equally secure the livelihoods of those dependent on vending. This approach aligns with the decent work agenda and pro-poor policies to regularize the sector while assuring security, social protection, and benefits for the vendors.

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**About the Researcher**

Ruth Chomola is a development and media practitioner with more than 5 years of experience in development work. She holds a Bsc Degree in Journalism and Media Studies and a MSc in Development Studies with the National University of Science and Technology. She has established herself as a researcher, policy and strategy consultant with a track record across different sectors ranging from civil society, politics and corporate governance. She continues to push for policy around the inclusion of youth and young women in decision-making. In her current position as the African Union Youth Advisory Board Vice Secretary, she also advocates for the use of research in development of context-based disaster risk reduction strategies in Africa.