



Global
Forum
on Food Security
and Nutrition

**Street foods: the way forward for better food
safety and nutrition**

Collection of contributions received

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Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the topic.....	4
Contributions received	6
1. Angela Kimani from FAO, Kenya	6
2. Falana Adetunji Olajide, Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria.....	6
3. Hamid Ahmad, Pakistan Society of Food Scientists & Technologists, Pakistan.....	8
4. Raziq Abdul from the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Pakistan	8
5. Bonny Dadji Stephane Serge from the National Nutritional Programme, Cote d'Ivoire.....	9
6. Edward Mutandwa from RDA, Rwanda [1 st contribution]	10
7. T N Anuradha from Solution Exchange, FAO, India.....	10
8. Mary Oyunga- Ogubi from the KARI-National Potato Research Center, Kenya.....	11
9. Syed Md. Zainul Abedin from the Department of Agriculture Extension, Bangladesh.....	11
10. Samuel Zombou from FAO, Italy [1 st contribution].....	12
11. A.K.M. Mostafa Anower from the Patuakhali Science and Technology University, Bangladesh.....	12
12. Suneetha Sapur from the Akkshaya Foundation, India.....	13
13. Edward Mutandwa, RDA, Rwanda [2 nd contribution]	14
14. Petronilla Mwakatuna from UK	14
15. Comments by Giorgia Nicolò, topic raiser [1 st comment]	15
16. Andrew Kwonyike, National Environment Management Authority, Kenya.....	15
17. Bill Gregory, Max Lock Consultancy Nigeria Ltd, Nigeria [1 st contribution]	16
18. Bill Gregory, Max Lock Consultancy Nigeria Ltd, Nigeria [2 nd contribution]	16
19. Salma Akter, Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra, Bangladesh.....	17
20. Olivia Muza, consultant, Zimbabwe	17
21. Habab Elnayal, the Sudan	17
22. Rahul Soman, Indocert, India [1st contribution]	18
23. Frans van der Ven, FAO Representative in Cape Verde	18
24. Moisés Gómez Porchini, Mexico.....	19
25. David Michael, Wonda Business & Technology Services, Australia.....	22
26. Hossain Uddin Shekhar, Dhaka University, Bangladesh.....	22
27. Sabrina Aguiari, University of Bologna, Italy.....	23
28. Dr. Syed Md.Zainul Abedin Abedin, Bangladesh	24
29. Frances Ann Warnock, FAO, Bangladesh	24
30. Kay Muir-Leresche, independent consultant, South Africa.....	25
31. Salome Yesudas, Deccan development Society, India.....	25
32. Meena Sehgal, India.....	26
33. Rahul Soman, Indocert, India [2nd contribution].....	26

34. Comments by Giorgia Nicolò, topic raiser [2 nd comment]	26
35. Syed Md. Zainul Abedin from the Department of Agriculture Extension, Bangladesh	28
36. Kanchan Lama, WOCAN, Nepal	28
37. Joyce Khaitsa Lambuli from Send a Cow Uganda.....	29
38. Md. Kamrul Islam from the Cotton Development Board, Bangladesh [1 st contribution].....	29
39. Samuel Zombou, FAO, Italy [2 nd contribution].....	30
40. Kalpagam Polasa, India.....	31
41. Suvashish Karmakar, Concern Worldwide, Bangladesh.....	31
42. Mohammad Aminul Islam from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh.....	31
43. Julia Suryantan from the Church World Service, Timor-Leste.....	32
44. Abdul Raziq from Saves, Pakistan.....	32
45. Md. Kamrul Islam from the Cotton Development Board, Bangladesh [2 nd contribution].....	32
46. Bill Gregory, Max Lock Consultancy Nigeria Ltd, Nigeria [3 rd contribution].....	33
47. Sajan Kurien from the Kerala Agricultural University, India.....	34
48. Violet Kadenyeka Mugalavai from Moi University, Kenya.....	35
49. Seyoum Mengist Ayalew, Ethiopia.....	36
50. Lalita Bhattacharjee and Abdul Mannan, FAO, Bangladesh	36
51. KV Peter, World Noni Research Foundation, India.....	37
52. Maïmouna Soma, FIAN, Burkina Faso	38
53. Balaram Sahu, Innovate Orissa Initiative, India	38
54. Patrice Yapi N'CHO, Côte d'Ivoire.....	39
55. Sabiha Lageard, United Kingdom	39
56. Kamal Karunagoda, Department of Agriculture, Sri Lanka	40
57. Xavier Medina, Open University of Catalonia, Spain	41
58. Concluding remarks by Giorgio Nicolò	42
Post discussion feedback.....	43
Salome Yesudas.....	43
K V Peter.....	43
Md. Kamrul Islam	43
N.Rajavel	44
John Andrew Siame	44

Introduction to the topic

Dear FSN Forum members,

I am very glad to be the facilitator of this online discussion as it is an excellent opportunity to exchange views on street food vending with an eye on lessons learnt and new perspectives and hopefully leading to concrete actions. I also hope this will be an opportunity to expand our network and collaborations.

First of all my name is Giorgia Nicolò and I am currently an Associate Professional Officer for Food Safety at the FAO Regional office for Africa based in Ghana.

Within our regional strategy on improving food safety and nutrition in Africa, I am currently designing a study that focuses on creating linkages between street food vendors and public/private institutions, as an incentive to improve the safety, quality and nutritional value of street food.

In other words, my research aims at understanding if, where canteen services are not available, namely in mainly all major public institutions such as universities, schools, hospitals and private companies, properly trained and “licensed” street food vendors, can formally fill the gap of daily food provision. This could be made possible by granting vendors the access to some basic facilities such as water and sanitation and adequate space adjacent to the institution premise. A voucher mechanism could also be envisaged for promoting the consumption of food from specific recognizable vendors.

Several studies have been conducted on the subject of safer street foods. In 2006 the FAO, together with Tanzania’s Sokoine University, investigated the level of malnutrition in school pupils in Tanzania showing that street foods make up a significant part of their dietary intake during the school days. According to studies conducted in Bamako, Mali, food consumed at home covers less than 75 percent of the total energy requirements for almost 40 percent of poor families. Street food vending provides foods which are generally not used at home such as ready-to-eat foods and also fruits and vegetables, which serve as healthy complements to the diet. As an example, in Bamako, mangoes purchased from street foods stands are the primary source of vitamin A, covering 99 percent of the needs of poor households.

Likewise, experiences from Asian countries also show how street foods are increasingly gaining importance to attain food security. FAO projects in Bangladesh have demonstrated the need for technical support and training to improve street food vendors’ food hygiene knowledge and practices as part of the institutionalization of healthy street food systems. Training on these issues is currently being provided with the involvement of key stakeholders and the ultimate goal is to develop in Bangladesh a groundswell of interest among the street food vendors for safe, hygienic and healthy food.

The relevance of the different experiences clearly shows that, to prompt a change towards safer and more nutritious street food, all stakeholders along the food chain (suppliers, consumers and food control authorities) must be involved.

In light of this, I would like to raise the following questions /reflections to be discussed among members of the FSN Forum:

1. We believe that creating a system of incentives (e.g constant number of customers/day, vouchers or some sort of recognition mechanism for good practices) is required for motivating

the street vendors to improve the informal street food sector. What types of incentives have worked in improving food safety and quality, what types have not worked and why?

2. Are there examples of concrete measures promoted by local authorities to recognize and increase visibility of street food vendors producing safer and/or more nutritious food and how have these actions influenced consumers' choices towards food? Have similar initiatives been prompted directly by street food vendors associations? How?

3. How can cultural norms and practices related to vendors' and consumers' behaviour regarding the food they prepare be strengthened and addressed within local contexts? What new mechanisms can be put in place to raise peoples' awareness on the consequences of their eating habits? New advertising methods which have been proven of being effective (e.g. alternative marketing strategies)?

4. Despite recognizing the importance of street foods, local authorities often appear weak in being able to control the potential negative impacts (unsafe food, pollution, disruptions in traffic etc). Can you inform us of innovative and successful policy approaches implemented by local authorities in this regard?

I wish a fruitful exchange and I thank you in advance for your inputs as they will contribute to refine our assessment and any future intervention on the ground.

Many thanks.
Giorgia Nicolò

Contributions received

1. Angela Kimani form FAO, Kenya

Dear Giorgia,
My name is Angela, nutritionist in Nairobi Kenya.

This is a very interesting topic as it touches every sector of development. This is because street foods are found everywhere in Nairobi. And this is a major income for most low-income people living in the city. They are usually concentrated in construction sites, social places like schools, outside worship places, markets etc. thus they play an important role to the growth of our economy and more importantly, on the nutritional status of workers.

Some of the incentives that I can suggest are:

- the role of the government in support of this sector is very important, in that, 'building formal shops' (called 'vibandas" in swahili) for the street vendors will be a MAJOR boost for the growing sector;
- creation of central water and hygiene facilities for the vendors (where they are concentrated)- but this must be well taken care of, as it can also be a source of water-borne diseases;
- the governments/relevant ministries to formally announce their support of the sector so as to give the public faith in this food sector;
- there must be regular inspection and orderliness so that the vendors do not sprawl everywhere (as is the case right now).

Some disincentives that have been taking place are:

- destruction of their small kiosks/shops that they have made for themselves by the council, not issuing them with trading licenses, thus, most of them do their businesses hiding.
- no concrete measures so far have been taken by the local authorities to recognize the street food vendors and also the local nutrition authorities should be in the fore front to assist them (the vendors), since they play a major role, that cannot otherwise be ignored, in improving the nutritional status of the larger population that cannot afford to go to regular restaurants.
- a lot of public education is needed to increase awareness of good nutrition to the populations, and the need to choose foods wisely.

I am not yet aware of any measures and policies that have been put in place to mitigate the negative impacts that can be raised by consumption of street foods. This is especially because of sprawling slums and polluted rivers and water systems, garbage, bursting populations in slums etc

Thanks,

Angela

2. Falana Adetunji Olajide, Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria

Dear Moderator,

Thank you for allowing this topic to be debated.

Street Foods is actually another strategy for those of us in the Nutrition Circle should explore to drive home Food and Nutrition Security for those people that directly or indirectly consume street foods rather than castigating the practice. It is a known fact that street food contribute significantly to the food chain especially in the urban setting where time for cooking as suddenly become unavailable, because of the seemly busy nature in the cities and even in some rural areas where early and late street foods are common.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is actually mindful of this fact when in one of her session encourage members state to develop guidelines that moderate the activities of the vendor and also develop guidelines that will ensure adequate and hygienic preparation of the street food to ensure nutrient security of the people that consume the food and as well as eliminate food borne diseases.

One of the ways forward to be considered is to see the possibility of organizing foods vendors into a group or an organization that can be easily identified with so that other issues of training and re-training of the Foods Vendors on hygienic preparation of the food and other edible produce as well as the place where the foods are cooked and served for consumption, can be effectively monitored and evaluated routinely. This will involve Government real committeemen so that the food vendors will not see it as another way of government trying to force them out of market or opportunity to levy them for the services they are rendering.

Having achieved the above, the next step is setting a standard or guidelines within which a foods vendor must operates can only be done with the organized Foods Vendors organization or group in attendance, this will convene government sincerity of purpose to the foods vendors and winning their confident to operate within the set out standards will be enhanced. The guidelines will spell out various do and don't that the association and members of the association must follow. The periodic monitoring to make sure that they comply and penalty for the association and specifically for the member that violate the regulation. The guidelines should contain modalities for produce sourcing, storage and duration, so that nutrients depletion of the sourced produces will be eliminated. The guidelines should also contain the periodic needs for certification of all Foods vendors with certificate of fitness that certify that the foods vendors are free from contaminable diseases like tuberculosis etc.

With an organized association government should provide an enable Environment that will encourage the foods vendors such as having access to Micro-credit that can enhanced their productivity and encourage serving of an adequate and nutrient dense diet or meal. Awareness creation for the public on the steps taking by the government to ensure safety of street foods consumption should be intensified to boost the confident of the foods vendors on the partnership that the government is actually forming with them.

With these and others means better food and nutrition safety can be achieved.

Falana Adetunji Olajide
Nutrition Division
Dept of Family Health
Federal Ministry of Health
Abuja, Nigeria

3. Hamid Ahmad, Pakistan Society of Food Scientists & Technologists, Pakistan

A good important topic for many developing countries of Asia, especially South & South East Asia. In the urban areas my reliable guess would be that almost 70 % people use street foods at lunch time in these regional countries. No doubt that these street foods provide a variety, nutrition, local taste, flavor and economic eating. By improving standards of hygiene and food safety these street foods have also developed into a higher layer of street food sellers. These are more expensive compared to traditional sellers. Also more component of animal protein (mainly chicken) is entering the traditional recipes. Whereas it has improved the nutritional value and added to the price, yet it has also necessitated more care and safety in the chain. We all know animal protein is highly perishable and its eating life span is temperature related / dependant. Most of these countries have warmer average temperatures. So, there is dire need to add & strengthen the food hygiene and safety of our street foods. I think one of the option that come to my mind is that let us allocate or built street food halls, markets at close by appropriate locations within the urban centers. In these halls there should be a common provision of hygienic facilities, like running water, area cleaning / maintenance, some kind of temperature control. All the vendors can pay a bit for these common provisions to deliver safer products. Local authorities should come in this venture to share costs and then exercise some food safety controls / rules, already existing in the national food laws or modified to cover these enterprises. The quality of fresh salads, fruits and vegetables that are used here need to be checked for quality and safety. The nutritional factor is already improving the street foods as said earlier with more and more chicken meat entering /modifying options / recipes. Currently the central business areas of big cities in these countries is all flooded with these vendors who cause traffic, cleaning problems and create a environment of pollution. Each vendors try to keep only his surroundings clean to attract customers and to cause problems for others around or for people walking on streets.

Hamid Ahmad

M.Sc.Chem.(Pb.),M.Sc.Agric.(Sydney),
Executive Council Member & Ex-Chairman,
Pakistan Society of Food Scientists & Technologists,
Lahore Chapter,
Islamabad, Pakistan.

4. Raziq Abdul from the Livestock and Dairy Development Department, Pakistan

Dear All,

The topic of street food is very important.

This issue needs some explanations, i.e. what type of food we mean here, simple food and factory produced things.

Like, the vendors selling vegetables, fruits and dairy products (milk, yogurt and shlombey or Lassi etc).

Also the vendors selling out poor dairy products (like qulfi, ice cream ect), with poor and unhealthy colors and flavors. Such products are unhealthy, even dangerous and sometimes carcinogenic, especially, synthetic colors and flavors. There are other street things like colored sweet water is poured on the ice ball (ice gola) are very dangerous, without any nutrient and unhealthy.

Some other food products are factory produced, selling out in the streets, like toffees and chocolates etc. Also the quality is critically debatable. Such products are one of the main source of plastic pollution.

All the above said things are the abstract of my personal experience from Pakistan.

I tried to simply convey my message very simply, though I do not know the jargons of this field.

Best regards

Raziq Abdul

President: Society of Animal, Vet. and Environmental Scientists (SAVES)

Organizer: Camel Association of Pakistan (CAP)

Coordinator: LIFE Network Pakistan

5. Bonny Dadji Stephane Serge from the National Nutritional Programme, Cote d'Ivoire

English translation

This topic is very interesting because it surely involves, in most cases, developing countries.

In Africa the issue of ensuring food safety is often seen as an absolute taboo, while at the same time we have to protect the food that we consume for the sake of our own health.

I think that education in strict food and nutritional hygiene rules and the reinforcement of state agencies, involved in food safety, at the statutory legal level through enforcement measures, could help improving the quality of the food offered by street vendors, with the purpose of ensuring a safe nutrition for people.

It is the responsibility of all organizations, whether local, regional or international, to train and educate people to be more responsible concerning how the population is fed.

Bonny Dadji Stephane Serge

National nutritional programme

Côte d'Ivoire

French original

Ce sujet est un sujet très intéressant car il doit concerner dans la majorité des cas les pays en voie de développement.

En Afrique la question de la sécurité sanitaire des aliments est souvent perçue comme un véritable tabou alors qu'il nous appartient de sécuriser les aliments que nous consommons pour notre propre santé.

Je pense que l'éducation aux règles strictes d'hygiène alimentaire et nutritionnelle et le renforcement des agences de l'Etat intervenant dans la sécurité sanitaire des aliments sur le plan juridique à travers des mesures de répression pourrait aider à améliorer sur le plan qualitatif les menus proposés dans les rues afin d'assurer une alimentation saine à la population.

Il appartient aussi aux organismes qu'ils soient locaux, régionaux ou internationaux de former, d'éduquer la population à plus de responsabilité s'agissant de nourrir la population.

Bonny Dadji Stephane Serge

Programme national de nutrition

6. Edward Mutandwa from RDA, Rwanda [1st contribution]

Dear FSN Moderator,

I would like to thank Georgia for raising this important issue on street vending. Indeed, street vending underlines the socio-economic milieu characterizing many developing countries from the sale of fresh and dried products (for example roasted locusts, roasted maize, meat, confectionary products, milk etc). Certainly, this is an important source of livelihood for the people involved. However, it also presents a major challenge related to food safety due to spread of diseases. Despite these problems, street vending is an activity that cannot be ignored because it is intertwined with poverty. There are important questions that we also need to ask about food safety. 1. Where is the food prepared? 2. Under what conditions of hygiene is the food prepared? 3. Do street vendors understand the basic requirements of packaging and preservation? 4. In which areas are street vendors supposed to be stationed? Pertaining to questions 4 and 5, I think that many street vendors do not properly understand these issues. In addition, many of them do not usually stick to their designated points of operation for example market stalls in the hope of getting more clients. This is why run-ins with the district authorities and police are common and I don't think that this is the solution. Concerning marketing issues, there is need to establish proper areas for example market stalls where different types of activities can be carried out. In my view, there is need to formalize street vending by a) ensuring that vendors are organized into viable groups for example cooperatives and then register their activities. When registered, these groups can have access to loans and training on their specific lines of activity. This will act as an incentive for them to register and make their activities as formal as possible 2) Engaging all stakeholders such as the representatives of vendors themselves, district authorities, Ministries of health and commerce to ensure that clear guidelines are set on food preparation, handling, processing, packaging and labelling. I have seen that in some countries in Southern Africa, they usually sample food stuffs through local health workers from vendors to check on food safety 3) I agree that Regular studies may be carried out to assess the extent to which this activity contributes to the GDP. Since many people are not registered, it is difficult to evaluate the significance of this activity. I would like encourage Georgia to carry out regional studies on street vending as a way of lobbying and advocating for this important activity. It is a good initiative.

Thanking you,

Edward Mutandwa,
RDA Rwanda

7. T N Anuradha from Solution Exchange, FAO, India

I would like to refer to one of the discussions on Food and Nutrition Security Community of Practice of Solution Exchange India on Food Safety in Urban Food Catering Services. The discussion Shares experiences and refers various studies and examples of policy intervention for improved health and hygiene towards improving urban food catering services

<ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/food/cr/cr-se-food-13040701-public.pdf>

8. Mary Oyunga- Ogubi from the KARI-National Potato Research Center, Kenya

Vitamin A (VA), iron and zinc deficiencies are of public health concern in Kenya. Although more than 40% of Nairobi's lower-income groups consume street foods (SFs), inadequate information exists on the contribution or potential contribution to micronutrient intake. The study objective was to determine household intake of VA, iron and zinc, and the proportion of the intakes from SFs. Cross-sectional surveys and a non-repetitive 24hr-dietary recall were employed. The study sites were Kangemi and Dandora in Nairobi, Kenya (low and middle-low income groups) respectively. Student's t-test was used to compare the means of independent data while χ^2 test was used to compare categorical data. The level of significance was set at $p=0.05$. Results indicated that there was no difference in the consumption pattern of SFs between the two sites. Street foods were less important VA source in Kangemi (4.4% of total intake and 2.64% of the RDA) than in Dandora (26% of total intake and 9.46% of the RDA) and there was a significant difference. The proportion of those who obtained at least 50% VA from SFs was significantly higher in Dandora than Kangemi. Differences in VA intake from SFs in the two sites were attributed to quantities consumed because there was no difference in the pattern and in the levels of VA in SFs from the two sites. Iron intake contributed by SFs significantly differed with Dandora being higher (30%) than Kangemi (21%). Although not significantly different, those who obtained at least 50% iron from SFs was higher in Dandora than Kangemi. Iron intake from SFs in both sites (15mg/AE in Kangemi and 25mg/AE in Dandora) was sufficient to meet the RDA for iron for adults (5-28mg/AE). From the quantities consumed, the difference in iron intakes was partly attributed to the consumption pattern since the consumption pattern of some iron-rich foods was statistically different between the two sites. Zinc intake contributed by SFs foods was higher in Dandora (25.2%) than Kangemi (16.7%). Those who obtained at least 50% on their zinc intake from the SFs was also higher in Dandora (12%) than Kangemi (7%) although neither of these differences was significant.

For the full paper *Street foods in Nairobi, Kenya: their role as a source of micronutrients in low income groups* please follow this link

http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Street_Foods/Street_Foods_Kenya_Oyunga-Ogubi.pdf

9. Syed Md. Zainul Abedin from the Department of Agriculture Extension, Bangladesh

Hi Giorgia,

Thanks for choosing a people oriented study. The topic of your study is so common and widespread that it is almost impossible to address the issue in a single research initiative. I welcome your effort to recognize the issue of street food as a topic of important study.

I like to thank you for referring the work in Bangladesh on street food. I request you to kindly present the main features of this work for enlightening the participants of the debate.

I feel that many research institutions, universities and related agencies have already done studies on various aspects of street foods across the world. If you can collect and showcase the findings of these studies you may formulate precious recommendations for food safety.

The issue of street food is very important and vital for most countries of all continents. What you have experienced in Africa may be seen also in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Thailand, Egypt and in many other countries. Hence the involvement of all nations and international bodies for this subject should be a common agenda.

For a secure and sustainable street food system following points may kindly be taken into consideration.

1. All government agencies should coordinate to maintain a safe street food system.
2. All nutrition and health related research agencies should emphasize their involvement on street food.
3. Teachers and students of nutrition should engage their activities for the safety and nutrition of street food.

Wish a very fruitful debate on this vital topic.

10. Samuel Zombou from FAO, Italy [1st contribution]

Dear all,

I would like to thank very much the moderators and Giorgia Nicolò for selecting this interesting topic on “Street foods: the way forward for better food safety and nutrition”. I have been greatly interested in street foods since days as a student at the veterinary school in Senegal. During my 2006 research at the Frigorifique abattoir in Bamako – Mali, I found that most of the offals were collected by women to cook one of the favorite street meals of Bamako locally called “Nougou”. I did a rapid participatory survey among those women and men and realized that most of them were not educated and that this activity is an important part of their livelihoods and food security.

After the experience of Mali, I went ahead to study “strengthening food security and street foods safety through microbiological quality control along the food chain in West African cities” for my master in Human Development and Food Security dissertation at Università degli Studi Roma Tre in 2010. I would like to share with you some of my findings which are relevant to the ongoing discussion (Abstract, Relationship between street food, food safety and food security, recommendations and conclusion)

[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Street_Foods/Strengthening food security and street foods safety S. Zombou.pdf](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Street_Foods/Strengthening_food_security_and_street_foods_safety_S._Zombou.pdf)

Finally we should keep in mind that street food is important for food security and addressing issues arising from this activity needs a multidisciplinary approach which takes into account the interests of all the stakeholders (producers and sellers, street food vendors, consumers, governments and municipalities, transporters, etc) and that focusing only on the quality and safety of the street food itself cannot solve the problem but the quality and safety of street food can be used as a tool to verify the level or the progress of the measures and actions implemented by all the stakeholders to change the situation.

Many thanks,

Samuel ZOMBOU

Human development and Food security Specialist

11. A.K.M. Mostafa Anower from the Patuakhali Science and Technology University, Bangladesh

Dear Moderator,

My comments on this current issue as below:

In this issue, I would like to identify it as Street Food Industry and it involves huge amounts of capital and millions of people yet they are often not given the official recognition they deserve. In many countries the street food industry is merely tolerated. Because the industry is spread over a myriad of locations and is not systematically coordinated in any way, it is common for clusters of vendors to be considered impediments to urban planning and hazards to public health. The negative attitude of officials toward street food vendors frequently reflects concerns about poor hygiene and the spread of disease. Lacking staff to enforce rules and regulations, governments have difficulty monitoring street food enterprises. Anyway, In Bangladesh food eating, buying and selling's are very commonly practice in besides the street of rural and urban area. The true fact that our government is trying to maintain food safety in bigger restaurants and hotels, unfortunately they failed due to insufficient manpower for monitoring. So, how they take care to the street food quality! It is simply unbelievable. At first need more public and street food vendor's awareness and then solve the alternative ways for street vendors. So, I think that non-government organizations especially FAO should involve in this public health issues aggressively. Otherwise, it'll be difficult by government. If we want to live long in this world, now is the appropriate time to aware the people about their street food hygiene.

Thanks

A.K.M. Mostafa Anower

Assistant Professor,

Department of Microbiology,

Patuakhali Science and Technology University

Bangladesh

12. Suneetha Sapur from the Akkshaya Foundation, India

Dear All

Street food in India is quite popular, well appreciated by rich and poor, educated to illiterate as they serve the local flavor and the mostly of the traditional foods are served on the streets, in recent time many Chinese and Italian foods like Chinese noodles, pizzas are served with local flavor like Chinese fried rice with curry leaves, burger with spicy aloo (potato) curry, that makes them quite acceptable with blend of local taste but savor a variety different multi cuisines. They are very cheap and are affordable by the common man. To make them hygienic and safe is very important to avoid any food poisoning and gastro enteritis and other health complications. The government has certain guidelines, rules and regulations to make these street foods safe and edible, but what I really observed is the lack of willingness to follow and to execute these guide lines, rules and regulations. It is not the lack of information, knowledge regarding the healthy hygienic practices on paper or the lack of rules and regulatory guideline in the government department but the lack of will, how to bring in this will, motivation and how to enforce the regulatory guidelines to see the desired change in food handling and cooking practices of street vendors is the real challenge.

Regards

Suneetha Sapur

Director- Akkshaya Foundation

Nutrition Consultant

13. Edward Mutandwa, RDA, Rwanda [2nd contribution]

Dear FSN Moderator,

The contributions made on street vending hitherto are quite interesting. Two of them focus on the contribution of street vending to nutrition (Mary from Kenya) and Falana (Nigeria). However, Razik from Pakistan points out the negative aspects of street vending. In my view, I think this is a balanced way of looking at the whole concept. I wanted however, to bring in the gender dimensions of street vending. There a significant number of women who are involved in this activity. In Harare, for example, many urban women are involved in cooking "mealie meal" commonly known as "sadza". This activity was and still remains very special in the minds of urban workers including the rich. In order to properly formalize this activity women groups of about 10-20 have been mobilized into a cooperative. This cooperative is registered with the council and is required to observe the rules of the council particularly as regards the environment and food safety. They also pay taxes and thus making the activity traceable. I am echoing the comments from Falana that it is important to promote cooperative associations to ensure that this activity is as formal as possible. In addition, there is need to create incentives targeting disadvantaged women who are often abused on the streets.

Edward Mutandwa,
RDA, Rwanda

14. Petronilla Mwakatuna from UK

I totally agree with Edward M. from Rwanda.

The central government and local authorities must work in conjunction with each other in order to formulate policies based on food safety and standards. The government have to allocate health officers to enforce and make contributions in amending policies to suit the food establishments.

All food business should develop food safety management systems based on HACCP, and staff must have food hygiene training and registered with local authorities.

Health officers have to make revisits and enforcement procedures to ensure food safety management systems are being implemented.

The Government have to set up Food safety awareness events to remind the businesses of the need of food safety.

Thanks

Petronilla Mwakatuma
Environmental health Practitioner-Food Safety
London Borough of Hounslow

15. Comments by Giorgia Nicolò, topic raiser [1st comment]

Dear street food forum members,

Thanks for such a dynamic and inspiring discussion. Many of you have also posted links to papers which will be of useful reference for me and many other forum participants. Organizations/ cooperatives of vendors seem to work as a strong incentive in many realities. However, this has also proven to be ineffective and even a failure in many other initiatives and I would like to encourage you to share with us some more specific project experiences and successful stories on this subject. I also personally agree that government and local authorities should take public positions and show a strong commitment for safer food to strongly orient consumers' choices. This actually leads to our second question: are there concrete examples of measures taken by local authorities to support vendors providing safe food and increase their visibility and how these actions have influenced consumers' choices?

Giorgia

16. Andrew Kwonyike, National Environment Management Authority, Kenya

Thanks for this interesting topic. It has been a practice which has gone on and on here in Kenya with little to no much attention from government. I totally agree that street foods is the main source of urban nutrition in Kenya's low income settlements. In fact with the current inflation it is definitely the practice almost everywhere in the urban areas including the CBD. It is not strange to find a Chief Executive of a company stopping next to a street vendor for a cheap street food sold at a road side stall. Most of these foods in the streets of the main urban cities in Kenya namely: - Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Eldoret and Nyeri to name but a few include roasted maize and groundnuts, arrow roots, yams, cassava, sweet potatoes and meat. Others are fruit salad, fried fish, French fries, chapatis and mandazis (Doughnuts) and in the recent past fatal illicit brews.

As an environmentalist, these street foods need to be thoroughly subjected to proper occupational and health safety measures to ensure high levels of hygiene. This is mainly the mandate of the Ministry of Public Health here in Kenya to ensure that health standards are maintained. Being an employee of NEMA – Kenya, our mandate is to supervise and coordinate in the management of the environment including all types of wastes that originate from these street foods. Consequently there are two major NEMA regulations which touch on these practices namely EMCA (Waste Management) Regulations 2006 and the associated E-waste guidelines and Air Quality regulation which is yet to be gazetted. The problem with these regulations and guideline is their enforcement which is usually done by the local authorities who may not be adequately trained and capacity build to carry out their mandates.

There is therefore need for public awareness of the best practices regarding the street foods, vendors and the customers environmental safety vis- a- vis the existing legislations. Similarly, the government need to regulate the vendors through proper licensing from both the local authorities and the relevant ministries. There is also need to set the very minimum standards by Kenya Bureau of Standards and relevant licensing boards to ensure that quality is not compromised.

Andrew Kwonyike, PhD
Principal Programme Officer
National Environment Management Authority
Nairobi Kenya

17. Bill Gregory, Max Lock Consultancy Nigeria Ltd, Nigeria [1st contribution]

Thanks for this wake up call. I'm with a consulting firm with long experience of urban and regional planning with much of it in Nigeria. We have University Links in the UK.

Our recent work has addressed street foods in different ways to all topics in this thread so far. We have been able to record all street food preparers in Kaduna, Nigeria - a city with a population of about 1.2 million. The nature of the food prepared and the location where cooked/sold has been placed on a GDI (Geographical Data Infrastructure).

There are a number of planning areas where this information is useful to us, but it has also allowed us to enter into funding dialogues with bodies who may be in a position to promote the deployment of improved firewood stoves to those involved in the cooking. Most food is cooked on three stone arrangements with firewood. Smoke inhalation is high and another health hazard that should be addressed in the overall debate.

In a separate survey a 5% sample of all residential compounds in Kaduna revealed approximately 200 persons involved in cooking street food as their 'main work'. We have quite good demographics on these people even though these demographics were collected with a general focus for our overall planning data requirements. Female heads of household and widows in particular stand out as being involved in the trade. Education levels are low.

We would be quite happy to share our findings and explore our data together with any contributors to this thread to ensure that the type of data that we have put together for our own purposes can be more widely used in the examination of street food cooking and selling to improve the lot of those who prepare the food and ensure the health of those who eat it.

18. Bill Gregory, Max Lock Consultancy Nigeria Ltd, Nigeria [2nd contribution]

Since posting about our own types of work with street food, I have gone through the whole series of posts to date. I feel that there is confusion within the forum and that this should be clarified by a degree of subject separation.

The two areas that I believe are being mixed and that should be considered separately are...

Street cooking of food for either immediate sale or sale with very little storage time at the point of cooking (in my experience storage much LESS than 30 minutes because food is generally cooked to demand) There is often a degree of re-heating of meats etc. that may require attention in the overall preparation - initial cooking - storage - re-heating for sale cycle. But food is usually eaten when fresh-cooked. Hygiene issues around food preparation and general serving environment...smoke in the cooking process.

Street hawking of food cooked elsewhere, where the issues are much more directly related to storage and the hygiene issues within the hawking container (often not properly cleaned) and the time between loading the hawking container and sale of the food.

It would be useful if further posts could focus on each major area as above....hard to post further as power here has just gone....another factor in food security.

19. Salma Akter, Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra, Bangladesh

I would like to thank very much the moderators and Giorgia Nicolò for selecting this interesting topic on “Street foods: the way forward for better food safety and nutrition”. According to Samuel Zombou, Human development and Food security Specialist we should keep in mind that street food is important for food security and addressing issues arising from this activity needs a **multidisciplinary approach which takes into account the interests of all the stakeholders** (producers and sellers, street food vendors, consumers, governments and municipalities, transporters, etc) and that focusing only on the quality and safety of the street food itself cannot solve the problem but the quality and safety of street food can be used as a tool to verify the level or the progress of the measures and actions implemented by all the stakeholders to change the situation.

I agree with him but another thing I want to share with you that in respect of nutrition and hygiene issues how much awareness has to the vendor, & consumers?

I think more awareness buildup training and awareness program should be taken in this regard with the collaboration of Go & NGO.

Salma Akter
Program Officer
Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra
Dhaka, Bangladesh

20. Olivia Muza, consultant, Zimbabwe

Thanks for this enlightening topic. This is a critical debate for food and nutrition policy in the 21st century.

However, for this to be achieved fully, an in-depth consultative process is key.

Perhaps we should establish

- 1) Who is providing street foods?
- 2) What is the target group/ niche market?
- 3) What motivates street food suppliers to provide the service in the street?
- 4) Why do their clients keep coming back for more?
- 5) Under what conditions should food be supplied?
- 6) What are the missing links and gaps in the current set up?
- 7) Who is responsible for overall good health practices in street food business?

Thank you

21. Habab Elnayal, the Sudan

Hi,

To have better and safer street foods I think reduced use of fertilizers and chemicals in food cultivation and which may have a direct impact on health should be promoted and organic food cultivation areas promoted and expanded.

Habab Elnayal
Livestock Monitoring & Evaluation Assistant
the Sudan

22. Rahul Soman, Indocert, India [1st contribution]

The problem faced today is twin headed.

On the one hand local rural people cannot think of without having street foods, but at the same time a lot of FBI (*Food Borne illness, Ed.*) occurs.

My experience in two countries, namely Kenya and Tanzania, and my own, India, tells me that we have to have strong policies and guidance for ensuring the safety of street foods. We have to educate both the consumers as well as vendors.

Also, government has to contribute significantly towards improving the safety of the products.

23. Frans van der Ven, FAO Representative in Cape Verde

Bom dia,

For those of the forum members who read Portuguese, the attached comprehensive report on street food vendors in Cape Verde may be of interest.

Please download the full document "*Estudo sobre Alimentação na rua em Cabo Verde*" here:

[http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Street_Foods/Relatorio_Alimentação de Rua Cabo Verde1.docx](http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Street_Foods/Relatorio_Alimentação_de_Rua_Cabo_Verde1.docx)

Best regards

Frans

Frans van de Ven
FAO Representative in Cape Verde

[Below is the translation in English of the Recommendations of the Report, Ed]

IV. Recommendations for intervention strategies to improve the safety and quality of Street Foods and for their inclusion in the formal sector

Organisation of the business of selling food on the streets: role of the competent authorities

- Inclusion of the sale of street foods in urban planning and infrastructure at the level of municipalities;

- Delimitation of areas and development of infrastructure in urban centres for the selling of street foods;
- Establishment of technical assistance programs and training targeted to vendors;
- Strengthening taxation of the street food sector (training of inspectors on inspection techniques in the street food sector and good practices for food handling sectors);
- Establishment of monitoring programs to protect health and quality of street foods.

All these measures and others could be part of a National Program on Food in Public Streets, whose implementation would be phased and would include a pilot phase. It would be essential in the preparation and implementation stages to adopt a participatory approach, involving all stakeholders (authorities, vendors and consumers), which will require the establishment of a multidisciplinary team.

Regulatory aspects

- Improvement of the licensing process for selling street foods (introduction of restrictions on the type of food sold and the sales area, etc.), and
- Establishment of regulations regarding street foods: development of good practice codes of hygiene-oriented for selling street food, based on food habits and on national legislation.

Technical aspects related to the preparation, preservation and display of food sold in the streets

- Preparation of specific technical guidelines for the preparation, conservation and exhibition of street foods, as well as other aspects that have an impact on safety and commercial value of foods, such as:
 - o Storage of drinking water;
 - o Kitchen material;
 - o Stocking and sale;
 - o Means used to heat or cool the food and energy used for this purpose;
 - o Packaging of food;
 - o Methods for displaying of food;
 - o Methods for washing and cleaning;
 - o Flows of garbage and sewage;
 - o Etc.

Consumer perspective

- Consumer education in the field of food safety and nutrition to encourage the practice of a safe and healthy food;

Educational programs

- Promotion of educational programs involving food handlers, vendors and consumers of street foods in order to raise awareness and provide information on aspects related to hygiene, basic sanitation, to selling techniques and food consumption on public roads

24. Moisés Gómez Porchini, Mexico

Original contribution in Spanish

Estimada Giorgia y todos:

La venta y consumo de alimentos en la calle es un asunto que es considerado generalmente como un problema que es necesario acabar, pues provoca molestias a la vialidad, compete deslealmente con el comerciante establecido y es una fuente de dispersión de enfermedades.

Hasta aquí es difícil decir que lo anterior no es cierto, pues en mayor o menor medida así ocurre en la mayoría de los países en desarrollo: los vendedores callejeros de alimentos obstruyen calles y banquetas, no pagan impuestos y muy frecuentemente no tienen las condiciones de higiene adecuadas.

De acuerdo, pero, ¿Cuál es en realidad el problema? ¿Por qué razón millones de personas venden o compran alimentos en la calle todos los días?

En mi opinión, la esencia de la cuestión radica en que la venta de alimentos en la calle (como la mayoría del comercio informal) es una respuesta a las condiciones de desequilibrio que se presentan en un sistema económico. El comerciante busca la informalidad al no poder participar legalmente en la actividad por las altas barreras de entrada (Propiedades o rentas caras, alto costo de la energía, tasas impositivas altas, regulaciones gubernamentales difíciles de cumplir), mientras que el consumidor busca la informalidad por el ahorro que le representa comparado con comprar en un restaurante formalmente establecido.

Pondré un ejemplo:

Yo vivo en Matamoros, México, justo en la frontera con los Estados Unidos. La población que se encuentra al otro lado del Rio Bravo es Brownsville, Texas, en donde es difícil encontrar un vendedor de alimentos en la calle, aunque sí los hay, mientras que en Matamoros hay miles de vendedores de alimentos en la calle. Las razones que veo para esta diferencia en la cantidad de vendedores callejeros entre Matamoros y Brownsville es que ¿para qué quiero vender en la calle en Brownsville si un empleo me sirve para obtener el ingreso que necesito para vivir razonablemente bien y para qué quiero comer en la calle si mi sueldo me permite comer en un restaurante?

En cambio, si vivo en Matamoros y tengo un sueldo de obrero de 7 dls. al día voy a buscar vender lo que sea con tal de mejorar mi ingreso y, como consumidor, con 7 dls al día de sueldo voy a buscar comer en la calle con uno o dos dls, lo cual no puedo hacer en ningún restaurante.

Por cierto, en McDonalds en Brownsville el sueldo es de aproximadamente 7 dls la hora, similar a lo que en Matamoros se paga por todo el día en el mismo McDonalds. La hamburguesa en cambio, cuesta igual en los dos lados de la frontera

Ahora bien, la cuestión de fondo es que en México, como en los demás países que comparten la situación, la venta de alimentos en la calles se ve, como dije al iniciar, como un problema al que hay que acabar, sin considerar las circunstancias que dan origen a su existencia.

¿Queremos que no existan vendedores ambulantes de comida? Paguemos sueldos suficientes y perderán la mayor parte de la razón de su existir. Como es improbable que esto suceda en el corto plazo al menos, enfrentemos la situación como lo que realmente es: una solución para la alimentación de millones de personas todos los días, que requiere ser apoyada, no eliminada, para que pueda cumplir con la función que ya cumple, pero de una manera eficiente. Considerando este enfoque, Angela de Kenya lo dice de manera muy clara desde la primera participación: Requieren ser apoyados para que puedan tener los servicios básicos de agua y drenaje y puedan ser objeto de inspección y control dentro de normas que realmente esté a su alcance cumplir. Pretender negar que existen o tratar de eliminarlos, como se hace actualmente en México, simplemente agrava las condiciones en que trabajan.

Saludos cordiales

Moisés Gómez Porchini

English translation

Dear Giorgia and all:

The sale and consumption of street food is a subject widely viewed as a problem that we must get rid of: it causes difficulties for the viability, competes unfairly with established businesses and is a source for the spread of diseases.

So far, it is difficult to say that the above isn't true, since to a greater or lesser extent this is the reality in most developing countries: food street vendors clog streets and sidewalks, are not taxed and very often do not have the proper hygiene conditions.

Okay, but what is really the problem? Why millions of people sell or buy food on the street every day? In my opinion, the essence of the matter is that the sale of street food (like most informal trade) is a response to the conditions of imbalance that occur in an economic system.

The vendors look for the non formal sector because they can not legally participate in the trade by high entry barriers (high prices or rental fees for properties, expensive energy, high taxes, government regulations difficult to enforce etc), while the consumer is looking for the same because he saves money compared to buying in a formal restaurant. Let me give an example:

I live in Matamoros, Mexico, just across the border from the United States. The town across the Rio Grande river is Brownsville, Texas, where it is difficult to find a food vendor on the street (although there are), while in Matamoros there are thousands of street food vendors. The reasons I see for this difference in the number of street vendors between Matamoros and Brownsville is: why I want to sell on the street in Brownsville if a job helps me to get the income I need to live reasonably well, and why should I eat at the street if my salary allows me to eat at a restaurant?

However, if I live in Matamoros and I have a worker's salary of \$7 a day I will try to sell anything in order to improve my income and, as a consumer, with a \$7 daily wage, I will try to eat at the street with one or two dollars, something I can't do in any restaurant.

Indeed, in Brownsville McDonalds salary is about \$7 an hour, similar to what in Matamoros is paid throughout the day at the same McDonalds. The burger however, costs the same on both sides of the border

But the bottom line is that in Mexico, as in other countries sharing the same situation, the sale of street food is seen, as I said at the beginning, as a problem that we need to finish with, regardless to the circumstances giving rise to its existence. Do we want no food vendors at all? Pay adequate salaries and they will lose most of the reason for their existence. Since it is unlikely that this shall happen in the short term, at least, let's face the situation as it really is: a solution to feed millions of people every day that needs to be supported, not eliminated, so that it can fulfill the task it has already, but in an efficient manner.

Taking this approach into account, Angela (from Kenya) states it very clearly since the first participation: they need to be supported so they can have basic water services and sanitation and may be subject to inspection and control within the rules that they actually are ready to comply with. To deny that they exist, or try to remove them -as it's currently done in Mexico- only deteriorates the conditions under which they work.

Best Regards
Moisés Gómez Porchini

25. David Michael, Wondu Business & Technology Services, Australia

I would say that low cost and as little regulation as possible should be the guiding constraint to start with. We don't really want to turn these street vendors into highly regulated high cost vendors, especially in low income countries. If this happens then a 'black market' surely follows and the whole exercise becomes pointless.

Accepting this as the constraint then the next move could be an education and awareness program (on hygiene knowledge and practices) for vendors about good practices for food procurement and supply (sometimes the same people in many poor regions), packaging (sometimes there is none) and storage. This could be accompanied by an education and awareness program for consumers. Finally, I would suggest examination of a branding scheme for those vendors who would like to take an extra step e.g. could be a simple certified tick for those who have undertaken the education program and agree to comply with best practices.

It would also be useful to have some education on what to do with products that are past their use by date.

Implementation always tricky and challenging but it might be an opportunity for a range of initiatives including some form of PPPs (*Public-Private Partnerships, Ed.*).

David Michael
Owner, Wondu Business & Technology Services
Sidney, Australia

26. Hossain Uddin Shekhar, Dhaka University, Bangladesh

Our previous experience on street foods of Dhaka city:

We conducted a pilot project, named "Institutionalization of healthy street food system in Bangladesh: A pilot study with three wards of Dhaka city corporation as a model" during the fiscal year 2008-9 which was financed under the research grants scheme (RGS) of the National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme (NFPCSP), Bangladesh. Three hundred street food vendors were selected for this study and were found to work for 13-18 hours per day and their average income is around 283 Tk (~4USD). Most of the shops do not have any fixed place to sale their commodity and 68% of them are occupying foot path creating obstacle to the pedestrian. This study revealed that significant proportions of drug resistant bacteria are spreading through street foods. However it was observed that proper training of the vendors ameliorated this situation to a significant proportion. Almost all of the vendors have found to have no knowledge about nutrition and even the consumers don't care about those matters. As a result, the quality of foods in the streets is also very low in terms of nutrition and unsafe in terms of health safety.

What can we do now to improve the condition?

At first we need to have a strong educated consumer society. Several NGOs like Vocta (Voluntary organization of consumer training and awareness), CAB (consumer association of Bangladesh) etc. can come forward in this regard and this type of organization need proper financing to implement consumer awareness programme. Once the consumers are aware of different aspects of food safety issues they will be more cautious, discriminating, demanding improved food handling, hygiene and sanitation etc.

Secondly street food needs institutionalization though licensing the vendors through proper training, formulating and implementing laws pertinent to street food vending and creating committee to monitor the quality of street foods.

Thirdly to overcome the financial condition micro financing/ bank loan with easy conditions should be made available to the true street food vendors. Food quality should be monitored on regular basis through trained food inspectors.

Hossain Uddin Shekhar, Ph.D.
Dept. of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
Dhaka University
Bangladesh

27. Sabrina Aguiari, University of Bologna, Italy

Thanks for this great topic.

Few considerations:

- Support development of this sector to provide better (cleaner and even healthier) food can have great positive impact on nutrition, on keeping small business alive while the industrialization of food systems grows, potentially on keeping small meat and vegetable producers in the market, on elaborating and developing cultural identities with room for individuals' innovation, on keeping the human relationships in the added value chain;

- any ideas for interventions on street food should go through gender analysis.

Enforcement of Food safety regulation can easily sweep away the most vulnerable entrepreneurs, notably women (due to less access to credit and assets).

- Standard of hygiene can be improved through training (seller and consumers) and knowledge of product related risks, and cleaner agriculture better than through laws that require new expensive equipments.

- enhancing safety could be interpreted as improving chances of those vulnerable who enter the sector not to be blackmailed by criminal organizations. In this direction there might be space for improving working conditions of those who sell street food.

In short: it is a delicate sector that if becomes the target of international development might not necessarily improve its level of quality and the well being of those who relate to it, unless a clear option to keep it in existence and accessible as an 'income generating activities' for many independent and not wealthy individuals - included women - is made.

28. Dr. Syed Md.Zainul Abedin Abedin, Bangladesh

Dear All,

The discussion demonstrates that the issue of street food has been recognized by all members of the Forum as a vital factor for better food safety and nutrition.

The members have also presented various recommendations or suggestions to institutionalize street foods as a component of food distribution system.

As the population is increasing fast, the street food sector will also be enhanced as a normal consequence. We need to organize the street food sector in a planned and systematic manner to ensure the safety and nutrition of the people of the world who chiefly depend on street foods.

As the first step, I propose that the Theme of the World Food Day (WFD) of 2012 be taken on Street Food Issue. I invite all members to propose an attractive Slogan to adopt as the Theme of World Food Day to be held on the 16th October, 2012. I suggest that FAO will take elaborate programs in its Headquarters and in all member countries to create awareness on safe and nutritious street foods on that day in 2012. Model street food makers and vendors may be given awards in the ceremonies organized at the national levels to create a sense of partnership and dignity among them. Popular leaders, experts and all stakeholders may be invited in the rallies, fairs, seminars and relevant events for ensuring participation of all.

29. Frances Ann Warnock, FAO, Bangladesh

Dear Forum members,

I want to reiterate that the way forward to improving the safety of street foods in a country such as Bangladesh is through practical hands-on training and education. The FAO Food Safety Project has just developed a training manual and training materials to improve good hygiene practices (GHP) of street food vendors with low education/ illiteracy. The materials were developed with inputs from Concern Worldwide, Nari Maitree, Sanitary Inspectors from the Dhaka City Corporation - and street food vendors. The training package consists of a series of flip charts with photos from the 'field' and simple messages related to promote GHP. There are notes for the trainer and a simple pictorial self assessment tool for the vendors and checklist for the sanitary inspectors. The FAO Food Safety Project will be working with partners to conduct training of trainers courses and street food vendors completing training will be acknowledged through certificate and perhaps join an award scheme.

I also want to bring into the picture the fact that many of the vendors we worked with in developing the training materials on GHP could only use thumb print. And an important point regarding who are the secondary audiences that should be trained on food safety and hygiene. We found that around 40-50% of the food sold in the street by vendors had been prepared in the home. So the family - especially women at household level - also need to be well informed about the importance of food safety and good personal hygiene to prevent food contamination and foodborne illness.

The FAO Food Safety Project worked with the ICDDR,B to conduct the first 'national survey of household food safety and hygiene practices, knowledge and beliefs in Bangladesh'. The findings are currently being used to develop a behaviour change communication strategy and campaign to raise awareness about food safety to commence January 2012. The primary

target audience is women aged 20-39 years, who are mainly responsible for preparing household family meals.

To complete these comments above, I would support the idea of FAO and WHO collaborating with governments and development partners to plan and conduct a global campaign to improve the safety and quality of street foods. I liked the suggestion of WFD 2012 addressing this important issue.

Thanks to forum organisers for allowing me to contribute to this exciting topic!

Frances Ann Warnock
FAO International Expert on Preventive Approaches to Food Safety
Food Safety Project in Bangladesh

30. Kay Muir-Leresche, independent consultant, South Africa

Thanks for a very interesting debate on a difficult subject. I would like to strongly endorse David Michael's contribution-- there is no point in trying to regulate an informal market but branding could be a good way to go and as some of the other contributors have indicated, education of consumers and suppliers and access to affordable facilities for suppliers to be more hygienic.

Olivia [*Olivia Muza, previous contributor, Ed.*] - as you suggest more research on the sector is needed and I would suggest that it is very important to be sure to find out from consumers why they use street food and what would get them to buy more, so that any interventions respond to their needs. If they don't, then other vendors will come in to fill the niche, despite any regulations or interventions.

Many thanks to everyone for sharing.
Kay Muir-Leresche

31. Salome Yesudas, Deccan development Society, India

Dear Giorgia and team,

I sincerely think street food is great help to many millions of people who rush to their workplaces, colleges and schools.

We need to see that these humble people are not only doing small business but they are great service providers.

We need to fight greater polluters who are bringing GMO foods into our daily diet.

I propose trainings and mutual learning sessions for all street vendors on dangers of GMO foods especially health hazards and other long-term ill effects of GMO foods.

This is the need of the hour.

Sincerely,
Salome Yesudas

32. Meena Sehgal, India

The selling street food is a livelihood option for some and an affordable option for others.

Availability and access to basic sanitary conditions for food preparation and storage seem to be the basic requirement in India - regulations and education being the other pillars to support safe street food

Meena Sehgal
Delhi, India

33. Rahul Soman, Indocert, India [2nd contribution]

Dear Sir, Dear Madam,

I have gone through the materials- Good Hygienic Practices in the Preparation and Sale of Street Food in Africa and found to be useful. But have the following comments.

1. On page 62, Illustration 4.5;- I don't think that a woman who prepares food, tasting food placed in the palm of her hand is a practice to be encouraged. It can seriously cause cross contamination. What she/he will be doing after that. Simply rubbing the palm on their clothes or where ever they found appropriate? Just watch them and find it out!!!
2. On page 77, Illustration 4.14:- Washing hands in the same place where one eats is not a good practice to recommend. And if any person uses soap bar, the water won't be enough to properly wash their hands!!! I have observed the practice in Africa in many places which is not at all advisable from my point of view and will go for 4.15.
3. On Page 78, Illustration 4.15:- A soap bar is seen for cleaning hands, which can contribute to cross contamination to the next user. Try for an alternative and the tap handle is not appropriate, if would say.
4. On page 94, Illustration 5.6:- No where I have seen people cleaning the bottom of the jar used to take water from the container which can significantly contribute to contamination of the water- Just observe the practice!!!
5. On page 98:- 6.2 Application of HACCP Principle to analyze street food hazards- First paragraph- the very first sentence that "HACCP is a general method applicable to all human activity" is misleading and not appropriate.

34. Comments by Giorgia Nicolò, topic raiser [2nd comment]

Dear Forum members,

Once again I would like to thank you all for the relevance of the comments you are posting. The view and opinions which have been shared are helping us to identify the main areas of interest on which our research should focus and what are the priorities to be addressed.

I would also like to encourage you to share all the documents and papers mentioned during this discussion. We should take this opportunity to create and feed a temporary online knowledge platform on street food vending which can serve as a reference tool for our work and even reach beyond the participants of this forum.

A couple of interesting examples of shared projects are, for instance, the FAO Food Safety Project conducted in Bangladesh and the report on street food vendors in Cape Verde, among others.

Some comments, while presenting empirical experiences also highlight concrete risks that may occur when trying to turn street vendors into “highly regulated and high cost vendors”. The discussed constraints (mainly the risk of creating a “black market” of vendors) are certainly to be kept into consideration. However, I believe that diverse opportunities can arise for different “categories” of street food vendors as this sector shows a great segmentation. In other words, while some vendors have a sufficient availability of assets to start their business, can rely on a relatively consistent monthly turnover and a certain degree of education, others use all their revenues to sustain themselves and their families and are almost illiterate. For this reason, while the first group of vendors can be more easily incorporated into institutionalization processes, for the second, more vulnerable group, micro credit schemes and safety nets programs must also be envisaged.

In a nutshell, some of the main points of our discussion can be summarized as follows:

1. The need for a multidisciplinary approach in order to create incentives for all the value chain actors. Proposed actions can include the creation of some type of “branding” mechanism which rewards with increased visibility those vendors who make the effort of improving the quality of the food they provide but also public awards given to model street food makers and vendors to create a sense of partnership and dignity among them;
2. The importance of education programs primarily focusing on consumers to increase their awareness and change their food preferences. Educate and inform consumers, both at institutional/individual and household level, would create an entry point to achieve sustainable changes;
3. The importance of considering the specificity of each region when conducting education programs. In some realities food is often cooked by a contracted or intermediary person while is sold by somebody else. In such cases, training programs should consider and target all value chain actors as experiences from Bangladesh show that a significant proportion of drug resistant bacteria are already spreading through street food vending.
4. The inclusion of the gender dimension in any activity, as the enforcement of food safety regulation can easily marginalize the most vulnerable entrepreneurs, notably women, due to limited access to credit and assets. In Africa, for instance, the majority of trading activities dealing with meat and poultry products (even across countries), which are also the most economically rewarding, are controlled by men.
5. The incorporation, in the urban planning process, of common spaces where street food vendors can be provided of water, sanitation and garbage disposal, among others. An interesting example can be seen in Ivory Coast where street food vendors share common spaces, called *Maquis*, with granted access to basic facilities;
6. The use of geo-coded data proposed as a tool to locate the place where food is prepared and sold, conduct a mapping of vendors according to their typology (intermediate/low turnover) and possibly understand what are the dynamics of their activities.

Despite the amount of information already exchanged, further research to collect primary data still need to be conducted as street food vending remains a complex and multi-faceted issue. For this reason, for our last week I would like to provoke the discussion on **new advertising methods which have been proven of being effective (e.g. alternative marketing strategies) for improving consumers’ awareness and innovative and successful policy approaches implemented by local authorities in this regard.**

Last but not least, I personally find very exciting the idea of proposing Street Food Vending as a theme for the 2012 world food day and I encourage everybody to think of an appealing slogan which, hopefully, could be further discussed in another forum.

Many thanks and have a good last week of discussion,

Giorgia

35. Syed Md. Zainul Abedin from the Department of Agriculture Extension, Bangladesh

Dear Forum members and participants,

I am very glad to learn that a training package has been developed through collaboration of FAO, ICDDR, Dhaka City Corporation and Nari Maitree. I would like to thank Frances Ann Warnock, FAO International Expert on Preventive Approaches to Food Safety of Food Safety Project in Bangladesh for presenting the nice information. May I request her to kindly present the training package in English for the knowledge of all concerned across the world?

I would suggest to replicate the activities of FAO and ICDDR in countries of each continent to inspire and involve the people worldwide for a positive change towards the nutrition and hygiene of street food system.

36. Kanchan Lama, WOCAN, Nepal

Dear Moderator,

The topic attracted my attention as it is for the poor, by the poor and of the poor in our country. Those who are a bit well off, they get access to better places for vending street food nearby the major departmental stores in the city, but those who cannot afford, are compelled to use sides of the streets with almost no public services such as electricity, water and sanitation. Every morning going to office, I cross a mother with her 2 year child who vendors roasted maize and fruits in the same place in a cart...and I think how can she manage her baby to go to toilet or taking her to sleep..? The needs of the vendors differ, in case of women from men vendors, in regard to toilets and resting place for children. Many of the women vendors came with their carts and children (at least one child). In such cases, may be the theme proposed for 2011 World Food Day could include proposal for special facilities for these mother vendors. They are often very poor, also are the main bread earners of the family...but they have not been given any special attention by the municipalities for facilitating a better way for street vending for bare livelihood. Many occasions, they have to pay the local police for allowing them to stay in the public places, by the streets. In some other cases, both men and women have been doing significantly encouraging street vending by using small loans from women's group savings and/or cooperatives. Educating them on hygienic steps is very important, which lacks in my country due to not granting this activity as a potential business for the poor. In some cases, street vendors having fast food items are significantly raising in numbers, among them some do good profits and upgrade their business. However food safety, sanitation and hygiene are some major areas to be considered by our municipality systems. The street vendors are not organized in a group and thus they do not find a way to claim their right to livelihood based on street vending; this aspect also is important to consider in the process of organizing the discussion and debates on this topic so that we can find ways to facilitate an environment for organizing their voices for better facilities for the street vendors as well as providing technical support to maintaining food quality.

Thanks

Kanchan Lama

WOCAN Associate

37. Joyce Khaita Lambuli from Send a Cow Uganda

Dear FSN - Moderator,

Street food vending is good for growing urban populations especially in the slums. It is cheap, fresh and accessible. However the danger associated with it is wastage. Because the street food vending is makeshift and most markets open past 4.30 p.m there is a lot of food waste. Most of the food rots and is thrown away as garbage due to lack of good storage and preservation methods. There is mass food waste near such makeshift markets or along the streets.

Sometimes quality is compromised where the vendors mix the rot food with the fresh one not to lose stock. At the end of the day there is no value for money spent.

The farmers at the grassroot face the blunt of exploitation with low prices. the middlemen buy their food from the gardens at give away prices but eventually the food is wasted and thrown away if all stock is not sold in time. It is the farmer who is worst hit with low prices regardless of the cost benefit analysis.

1. We need to improve food preservation methods in order to promote street food vending.
2. There is need to plan for the markets so that they are not makeshifts and sometimes the vendors loose stock to local government authorities who threaten them of illegal activities and destroy their stock.
3. Safety measures need to be undertaken to avoid contamination with poor food handling methods.
4. Training is important to avoid waste. How can we harness food wastage due to poor storage methods?

Joyce

38. Md. Kamrul Islam from the Cotton Development Board, Bangladesh [1st contribution]

Dear Forum Members,

I thank to Frances Ann Warnock for their initiative to provide training to the women of Bangladesh about food safety.

However, for the street food safety in Bangladesh, we need to consider the followings details:

1. Who is the vendor?

Both man and women of diverse .group in Bangladesh sell food to the street. Some of them are floating, sell food in bus or train or moving from one place to another and some sell food regularly in a common and open place. They are poor and they do not have own food security and have no knowledge about food safety.

2. Who are the customers?

Low income group to middle one, who want to eat something and save money, never care for food quality.

In this context, we need to identify the different stake holders of street food, and develop specific training module as per need.

Thank you very much.

With best regards,
Md. Kamrul Islam

39. Samuel Zombou, FAO, Italy [2nd contribution]

Dear all,

Thank you for the comments regarding HACCP and GHP in the preparation and sale of street food in Africa.

I should mention that it is not possible to refer to HACCP when we are dealing with street food vendors in developing countries; such is the case with sub Saharan Africa. I would recommend the “five key’s to safer food” as suggested by WHO, and also the possible implementation of training via participatory-approach tools. For example the Socio-economic and gender analysis (SEAGA) tools are powerful and innovative, which can be easily applied to the street food sector. It takes into account not only gender issues but all other relevant issues regarding the street food sector.

We should keep in mind that street food is a good example of a development issue. By working together, with all stakeholders involved, we should be able to get to the root of the problem, to see what the real problems are with this sector. By pursuing this methodology everyone becomes accountable and takes ownership, which of course means that the sustainability of solutions are far more likely.

By the way, I should mention that according to my dissertation on street food in 2010, FAO did various unpublished studies recently in various countries in West Africa:

- Seck K.M. (1999). L'alimentation de rue à Dakar: Résultats de l'enquête socio-économique/FAO-TCP. FAO/TCP.
- Nago M. C. (1999). Strategies pour la réorganisation de l'alimentation de rue à Dakar-FAO/TCP/SEN/8822 (A).
- Nago M. C. (2003). "Mise en oeuvre d'une strategie de promotion de la qualité de l'alimentation de rue à Bobo-Dioulasso - FAO/TCP/BKF/2801(A)
- Fall A.B. (2004). Promotion et controle du secteur informel de l'alimentation de rue dans la ville de Conakry / FAO-TCP/GUI2901. FAO.
- Fall A.B. (2004). Promotion et controle du secteur informel de l'alimentation de rue dans la ville de Bissau / FAO-TCP/GBS/2202.
- Diawara B., K. C., Konkobo C., (2003). "Promotion de la qualité de l'alimentation de rue à Bobo-Dioulasso - FAO/TCP/BKF/2801.
- A study in Cap vert (a person mentioned already this study in the forum)

One of the important findings of these studies is that the sector is important for food security, nutrition and well being and there is a need to organise the sector but one of the challenges is the sustainability of the actions.

Samuel Zombou
FAO Rome

40. Kalpagam Polasa, India

I would like to get information on street foods in Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal

41. Suvashish Karmakar, Concern Worldwide, Bangladesh

Dear Forum members,

We congratulate FAO Food Safety Project team in Bangladesh to take the initiative to make aware street food vendors and consumers about the safety of street foods in Bangladesh. We are feeling proud as a member of the team to develop the training manual and training materials to improve good hygiene practices (GHP) of street food vendors with low education/ illiteracy. This particular module could be replicated by government, local government and humanitarian organizations/NGOs who are working in the same ground. The Investment for Economic Empowerment of Street-dwellers (InvEST) is a three years (Nov. 2010- Oct. 2013) project is implemented by Concern Worldwide in partnership with Nari Maitree. The project is funded by shiree / UKaid. This innovation project supports 700 street-dwellers households in Dhaka city to establish a brand of a food business chain to increase their income and expand asset base to graduate from extreme poverty. Hence we are very much enthusiastic to learn and share this module from FAO. We know that during the module preparation the respective government and autonomous departments/agencies such as BSTI, health department of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and CAB were involved in the process. However, if they could be involved in such forum directly then we could get government's policy related discussion on street food vending. We again salute the Food Safety team of FAO and wish them good luck.

Regards,

Suvashish Karmakar
Project Coordinator – INVEST
Concern Worldwide, Bangladesh

42. Mohammad Aminul Islam from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh

Dear Moderator:

Thank you very much for raising this very important issue. The street food industry has been playing a vital role in meeting the food demands of the urban dwellers in many developing countries. In countries like Bangladesh, street-food vendors are often poor, uneducated and lack appreciation of safe food handling. Consequently, street foods are perceived to be a major public health risk. One of the ways to minimize this risk is to educate the street food vendors with appropriate knowledge of good hygiene practice (GHP), which has been addressed adequately by Frances Ann Warnock from FAO. I think it is equally important to assess the quality of street foods. As far as public health risk is concerned there is a severe lack of data on microbiological quality of street foods from developing parts of the world. We do not know the bugs that have been transmitted via street foods. Certainly MDR bacteria are transmitted but detailed characteristics of the bugs need to be investigated. It is important to find out the sources of these bacteria as well, whether it is from the food itself or from the person who is preparing the food or from water supply that has been used to prepare the food. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the transmission routes of the major foodborne pathogens in the food processing chain from kitchen to consumer (like farm to fork). Besides, the types of foodborne pathogens are continuously changing due to changes of food habit, food ingredients and

preparation practices. We do not know the burden of pathogenic microorganisms in foods that we are eating from the street vendors. Moreover, the types of foodborne pathogen that are predominant in one country may not be problems for another country in a different geographical location. A systematic surveillance of foodborne pathogens in street vended foods would answer these queries, which would eventually help us estimating the risk of foodborne illnesses in the community incurred by street foods.

Thank you very much.

Mohammad Aminul Islam, PhD
Associate Scientist
Enteric and Food Microbiology Laboratory
icddr,b
Bangladesh

43. Julia Suryantan from the Church World Service, Timor-Leste

Dear All,

I would like to raise attention on post training follow-up when the trained food vendors have to apply what they have learned during the training. As we are all aware, many of these food vendors are small business entrepreneurs (mentioned earlier above: for the poor, by the poor and of the poor in the developing countries). Most of them don't have access to safe food ingredients, safe place/way to prepare the food, safe place to sell their food, and etc., because most of the times, those things are relatively expensive for them. In the condition where they have already linked to microfinance or other financial project, it would probably easier for them to make the changes, however whenever they haven't have access to, they may find difficult to change their way of doing the business. It is important to consider in the training plan for street food vendors to link them with micro-finance or other financial institution who can support them to make the changes possible.

Thanks

Julia

44. Abdul Raziq from Saves, Pakistan

Today, I took my camera and started photography of the street food. I could not manage many pictures today. I have one in hand now. I shall take more tomorrow and so on.

Here in every season, different food in the streets are sold by vendors. Nowadays, cuts of sugar cane, banana, pomegranate and many more things are visible in the streets.

I can share even more.

Today is share two picture with the cuts of sugar cane. The cuts (pieces) are chewed. It is rich source of energy and water. ([photo 1](#), [phot 2](#))

Best regards once again

Dr. Abdul. Raziq PhD

45. Md. Kamrul Islam from the Cotton Development Board, Bangladesh [2nd contribution]

Dear Sir,

Thank you so much for publishing my comments on forum website.
Few more words for your kind consideration.

Possible pathway to improve street food safety

1. To consider that the street food cycle is a local phenomenon that differs from place to place and time to time.
2. Local based identification of street food vendors and customers
3. Identifying the health hazards associated with street food cycle for a specific locality
4. Developing appropriate training materials that should include what food to be eat, how it to be prepared, how to conserve and market.
5. Provision for registration of street food vendors
6. Obligation to food safety training prior to obtain registration
7. Mass communication of the street food safety issue
8. Collaboration among the national and international organization together with public private partnership.

Indeed, to insure the street food safety is a noble issue but difficult to achieve without proper collaboration among different organizations locally and globally.

Thank you very much.
With best regards,
Md. Kamrul Islam

46. Bill Gregory, Max Lock Consultancy Nigeria Ltd, Nigeria [3rd contribution]

Thank you for this opportunity to raise the topic of Street Foods for global discussion amongst the few that have been able to respond to this window of opportunity given by FSN/FAO.
I have followed the discussions and have a number of observations to make....

- Most of the comments have been exhortatory. They have expressed a will to support things to promote food hygiene with the setting of the forum
- They have seemed to come from an interest in the issues rather than practical involvement in them
- They have commonly focused on regulation of all things involved in an idealistic manner, although some have pointed out needs to pay attention to the reality of local circumstances and the difficulties for all within a regulatory environment, particularly the poorer women who have been regularly identified within this forum as being the prime segment of society involved with cooking and selling/hawking Street Food. Especially those who are widows. I would support the support of the people involved itself rather than any regulation – in my environment this would be very counterproductive
- The FAO manuals to help identify already agreed recommendations for practice in these areas have been revealed to me through this forum. I have read the material and am happy with its professional level.

However, I feel that the general focus of the discussion of the issues surrounding Street Food have over concentrated on hygiene and regulation. I feel that they have not focused enough on practical realities, as revealed through the forum, about livelihood and a solid foundation in what is really happening within the Street Food market in the kinds of communities we have shared information about for both those engaged in it and those who take benefit from it as consumers.
My own work has a goal to build on the demographic profile of street food preparers and their spatial location within a city of 1.2 million people in northern Nigeria (as to a degree communicated

in my previous posts) to contact and work with the State Authorities here that have a focus on women's affairs to work as follows.

- to stimulate State Government Assistance (in the Nigerian context) to provide improved Firewood Stoves to the key Street Food cooking persons in our local environment, particularly women who are heads of households and especially those who are widowed. Firewood cooking is almost exclusively the medium of Street Food preparation in my own environment. Firewood supply here is rapidly running out.
- to embody in this distributive programme an in-built education system about food hygiene for preparation and selling of Street Food and look towards cooperative modalities between Government and the food sellers for purchasing and, perhaps marketing, as part of this drive for improved cooking methods
- to stimulate local production of improved cooking stoves and, thereby, include additional fuel sources from agricultural and urban sources of combustible material (in the short term) - local industrial resources formerly used for brick-making potentially available for ceramic stove elements
- to include solar cooking or water heating methods as part of the educational suite within the training programme envisaged
- to look to expand all these elements into the general household environment to take advantage of improved cooking technology and improved knowledge about the need for hygiene in all aspects of food purchase, preparation, cooking, short-term storage and distribution – the focus, initially, to be on female heads of household – particularly those who are widowed.

I bring these observations to the forum as it is about to close, but...

- would welcome this window of opportunity being opened on a long-term basis for an avenue for the world-wide community to contribute in what should be a continuing debate
- would welcome Street Foods being the focus of FAO as an international event as recommended by a previous contributor
- would hope to engage with yourselves and Kaduna State Government in promotion of the goals as stated above to bring practical and long standing improvements to the welfare of the Street Food preparers and consumers in my local community.

Meanwhile, I'm about to go out and get some Street Food myself.

With best regards

Bill

47. Sajan Kurien from the Kerala Agricultural University, India

Dear all,

My views on street foods are shared below.

Right to normal life means right to the basic requirements of life i.e. food, shelter and clothing. As human civilization progressed changes in each of the three basic requirements have undergone a sea of change. Rapid strides in development on all fronts has made life easy, enjoyable and to some extent satisfying if not at the least meeting the requirements.

One step further, in the present world right to life means right to dignified life where the most essential of the essential ----“food” becomes the focus. Within this broad aspect comes in an array of aspects like production, distribution, availability and most importantly the affordability. In this particular short chapter the main focus is on the last two aspects availability and affordability.

Street foods provide an easy answer to “accessibility to food” - to the people around the world particularly in the overpopulated areas of the developing and the underdeveloped parts. Access to food is mainly dependent on the two points in focus. Street foods ensure both availability and economy i.e. with no much pinch on the purse. The rich and the affluent for whom money is not a criterion, prefer and wish to dine only in class star hotels. The poor man on the streets who lives by the hard earnings on the street has to satisfy his belly with his meager income and for him there is no other alternative other than the common mans street shops.

There are many plus points in the case of street foods like availability at odd places and at odd time, easy and quick availability, time savings and availability of the local preparations which may not be as available and as per desire or to the taste of the palate in restaurants. The metros of Bombay and Delhi provide a striking and classic example of the scenario, the former being a blessed centre with many shops or mobile shops of street food and the latter with less making it difficult for the common man and making life miserable for the low and marginal income group . The street shops selling the street foods are known by the local vernacular names like ‘tapris’ in Maharashtra; Dhabas in Punjab ,‘Thattukada’ in Kerala so on and so forth each specialising in the local culinary preparations to satisfy a select class the common man

The major deficiency of the system is the poor hygiene and food controls. Again striking comparison is in this line is the street food joints of State Kerala and other parts of India. In the former case the high literacy rate has made the owner of the joint, to meet basic hygienic controls as the consumer has a high degree of awareness whereas in other parts this consciousness is yet to come. This has prompted even the affluent class to visit the local street food joints when there is shortage of time or to taste a particular local delicacy. Even in such cases there is repeated use of cooking oil used for frying which is proven to be carcinogenic and some other issues that ought to be addressed.

To sum it up street foods are a big support that takes care of the food security system particularly for the poor, the underprivileged and marginal income group. What are required are strict legislations on hygiene and food controls. This control exercise can come in the form of licensing so that quality is ensured and good food and good raw materials are used. Certainly the street food joints are here to stay with food inflation reaching phenomenally high levels the need of the hour is stringent controls on hygiene and delivery of good and safe food. If the gospel of "food for all" is to be realised this shall be one of the entities that should and merit attention. After all there cannot be anything that is more satisfying than ensuring food for all.

Dr. Asjan Kurien
Assoc. Director of Research
Kerala Agricultural University

48. Violet Kadenyeka Mugalavai from Moi University, Kenya

Dear Participants,
I am pleasantly obliged to make my contribution.
My observation is that many food street vendors use minimum best practices that are within their capacity and capability.

Involving the government ministries in whose docket public health falls into to create simple hygiene and sanitary infrastructure and technologies that small clusters of vendors will take social responsibility for towards sustainable maintenance and care is a good way forward.

Policies that outline the implementation of such infrastructure and technologies before embarking on street vending livelihoods would protect the consumer from the health hazards that may arise thereof, and the government would avoid a huge medical bill. There is therefore need for capacitating all the stakeholders within the street food nexus for sustainable livelihoods and use of the facility thereof.

Violet

Dr. Violet Kadenyeka Mugalavai,(PhD).
Moi University, Chepkoilel University College,
School of Agriculture & Biotechnology
Head of Department,
Dept of Family & Consumer Sciences,
Kenya

49. Seyoum Mengist Ayalew, Ethiopia

Dear all

As we have seen in many parts of developing country, streets foods are a growing business sector from time to time while this is one of the main sources of supply food demand of communities with low and medium income level in developed community.

As one of the major source of accessing food items by urban community, street food should get more attention regarding rules and regulation for both safety and other standards. This sector is just born in countries like Ethiopia, but due to the less focus given from policy regulatory body and health institutes; the sector is also a potential problem to create a food safety problem due to lack of monitoring made by health officials.

If we have made a road map for the development and regulation of street foods, it will improve the food availability and access to the people in need and for those who have limited income to afford local food dealer and hotels.

Seyoum Mengist Ayalew
Graduate Student, Food Security Studies , AAU
Researcher, Socio economics and Research Extension , EIAR

50. Lalita Bhattacharjee and Abdul Mannan, FAO, Bangladesh

I would like to follow up and supplement the contributions made by our colleagues from Bangladesh on the issue of street foods.

The National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme being implemented by FAO in collaboration with the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management, Bangladesh supported a study in 2007 -2008 on institutionalization of the street food sector and capacity strengthening as part of its research component to inform the national food policy and its plan of action. The study was carried out by the Consumers Association of Bangladesh

and Dhaka University. Institutionalizing safe and hygienic street food vending systems and all food establishments in urban areas has been identified as one of the medium/long term actions in the Plan of Action (2008 -2015).

According to the Dhaka City Corporation, there are as many as 200,000 street food vendors in Dhaka city which is increasing due to the demand of an urban population growing at a rate of 5% each year. With increasing number of people coming from rural areas in quest of employment every year, there is overcrowding and inadequate sanitary and other infra structure which create challenges to the street food systems and their management. Street food systems in Bangladesh have low investment with most of the street food vendors owning the business and working for nearly 13 to 18 hours per day. A survey and analysis carried out in three phases and periods in the study, identified 'high risk' foods with high total bacterial counts as *lassi*, *sandwich* and *sugar cane juice*. Of all the foods analyzed, *choola boot*, *ghumni*, *singara*, *sugar cane juice*, *cake*, *bhel puri* and *samucha* had a total microbial load and total coli form count between medium to high risk zone according to WHO standards. Drinking water samples from selected wards in Dhaka city were found to be mostly unsafe in terms of both total bacterial load and total coli form count. Hand swabs showed that the mean total bacterial load ranging from medium to high risk zone while hand wash samples showed a slightly better trend with bacterial count from medium to no risk zone. In particular, untrained vendors were noted to be carriers of total bacteria and coli form causing low to medium risk according to WHO standards. Vendors generally prepare the food with their bare hands, passing on germs and bacteria to the foods that they prepare and serve. The water used to prepare foods and to clean cooking and eating utensils, the swab cloths used for drying – are all sources of contamination. The foods are often stored and sold on open trays and germs from waste collected on the streets are easily transmitted. There is need for enhancing public awareness and media advocacy on the safety and nutritional aspects of street foods as a priority.

On regulation and legislation issues, street food vendors need to be registered with the local government authorities with provisions for renewal of regular registration. License and identity cards need to be given to the vendors for public display on registration, which would allow them to carry out their business, abiding by these impositions, without any undue harassment from any agency.

Transparency in the application of the laws on street food vending is an absolute necessity as this affects a large number of poor people and is also intricately related with urban development. A policy brief on the issue of street foods in Bangladesh with a focus on Dhaka is available for information of readers.

http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fsn/docs/Street_Foods/Safer_Street_Food.pdf

Feedback and comments are welcome.

Lalita Bhattacharjee
Abdul Mannan
FAO, Bangladesh

51. KV Peter, World Noni Research Foundation, India

Street foods are the main food source for migrants to cities and towns. They provide a variety of cuisines at affordable prices. The local food inspector from the Health Department of local government inspects and issues food safety certificates to such shops. I have enjoyed street foods. But my concerns are unclean plates, oils heated and reused, and above all health of employees. What standards hold in restaurants should be relevant in street food vendors.

There are also street food vendors where food items are outsourced.

When outsourced, quality of raw materials are not visually ensured. There needs to be certification of street food shops as being done for starred hotels. To avoid corruption in giving certificates/starred status, consumer associations can have a pro-active role.

52. Maïmouna Soma, FIAN, Burkina Faso

[contribution in French, English will be available soon, Ed.]

Salut à tous chers membres.

Je remercie le modérateur de nous avoir donné l'occasion de parler des aliments de la rue qui sont une réalité dans les pays en voie de développement.

Nul n'ignore la présence et le rôle des aliments de la rue dans les pays en développement qui sont les pays les plus touchés par la faim et l'insécurité alimentaire.

Il revient moins cher à un individu pauvre de s'abonner dans une cantine ou de s'acheter de la nourriture déjà préparée que d'acheter d'abord les ingrédients, ensuite de se procurer l'énergie pour la cuisson. Encore faut-il qu'il ait le temps et le matériel nécessaire pour la cuisson. Il est plus facile pour lui d'aller manger dans la rue. Alors que souvent ces aliments manquent d'hygiène et sont la source des maladies intestinales et diarrhéiques pouvant provoquer la mort. Ce qui est un grave atteinte au droit de l'Homme à l'alimentation et à la sécurité alimentaire.

Que faut-il faire?

Ce secteur contribue énormément à booster d'une part, l'économie de ces pays et d'autre part, à lutter contre la faim. Il n'est donc pas question d'interdire ce type de commerce.

Pour moi, le rôle de l'État se trouve à trois niveaux. L'État qui est le garant du droit à l'alimentation et de la sécurité alimentaire doit former, sensibiliser et contrôler régulièrement les conditions d'hygiène et la qualité nutritionnelle des aliments de la rue.

1-Pour la formation: Toute personne désirant vendre de la nourriture doit au préalable avoir une attestation. Pour ce faire, l'État, avec la collaboration des associations et des ONG, doit réunir et former chaque année des gens ayant l'ambition d'exercer ce type de commerce. A l'issue de cette formation une attestation est délivrée pour servir de preuve pendant le contrôle. Aucune personne ne doit être embauchée dans une cantine privée ou publique sans au préalable suivre cette formation.

2-Sensibilisation: l'État doit organiser des campagnes de sensibilisation à travers les spots publicitaires à la télévision à la radio, des affiches dans les centres de santé et même dans la rue, et des mises en scène dans les centres culturels, sur les conditions d'hygiène alimentaire. Cela va servir non seulement pour les vendeurs des aliments mais aussi pour les ménages, ainsi les individus pourront eux même observer ces règles avant d'acheter leur nourriture

3-Contrôle: l'État doit contrôler la qualité de la nourriture de la rue ou des cantines, qu'elle soit privée ou publique par des sorties régulières des agents sur le terrain, la première des conditions serait la présentation de l'attestation, ensuite on vérifie les conditions de propreté au alentour et la qualité de la nourriture.

Maïmouna SOMA

Chargée de Programme et de Développement
à FIAN Burkina

53. Balaram Sahu, Innovate Orissa Initiative, India

Dear All,

Street foods are always pro-poor and have more demand in developing countries. Nowadays these

are more seen around educational institutions in cities, where most students prefer for the fact of cost and easy access within short time. One aspect of these street foods is the sanitary measures taken by food maker and food dispensers at the time of making and dispensing. Some measures like covering food items with hygienic cover/sheets, serving food in freshness/warm conditions are some factors required to be taught to the takers as well as givers. Although food safety rules, food inspection works are there by Government, these are nonexistent. There should be more practical approaches like enunciation of common minimum sanitary standards for all street food providers.

Beast wishes
Balaram Sahu

54. Patrice Yapi N'CHO, Côte d'Ivoire

[contribution in French, English will be available soon, Ed.]

Chers Tous,

A travers la présente, veuillez recevoir notre contribution au débat.

Quelles sont les incitations à l'amélioration de la sécurité sanitaire et de la qualité des aliments qui ont bien fonctionné, quelles sont celles qui n'ont pas fonctionné et pourquoi ?

Bonnes pratiques :

Des années durant, les vendeurs ou vendeuses se trouvaient aux abords des établissements scolaires. Eût égard aux manques d'hygiène de certains vendeurs, l'Etat de Côte d'Ivoire a pris des mesures ; à savoir :

- la détermination d'un lieu de vente approprié au sein des établissements ;
- le contrôle des vendeurs et des aliments à travers un comité mis en place au sein des établissements ;
- l'entretien quotidien du lieu de vente par les acteurs intervenants sur les marchés ;
- l'autorisation est faite aux vendeurs et vendeuses en début de l'année scolaire selon les critères établis.

Ces mesures ont limité les contaminations et autres indigestions. Elles permettent un contrôle permanent des vendeurs et des aliments.

Meilleures salutations à tous et à toutes.

Patrice Yapi N'CHO, Expert en Développement des Filières Agricoles
Economiste, Diplômé des Hautes Etudes en Gestion de la Politique Economique
Côte d'Ivoire

55. Sabiha Lageard, United Kingdom

Dear Forum Moderator

My views on street food safety are based on first hand experience as a consumer and also as a researcher on food system in Bangladesh.

It is true that street food consumption often poses a serious health risk mainly due to poor health and safety standards maintained by the street vendors. There is no question however that the street food plays a very important role in meeting the demand of cheap food on one hand and income security on the other. Street food outlets have been an essential part of the food supply system everywhere in the developing countries. Most vendors operating on the street are working in the informal sector. Their aim is to avoid unnecessary expenses as their starting capital threshold is very low. They very much depend on what they earn on a daily basis to support their family. If these

vendors are forced to incur extra expenses in order to maintain basic health and safety standards, then they are likely to go under ground.

Street food is pivotal to the overall food security. Therefore every attempt should be made to insure its survival. Attention should be given to providing assistance to vendors, showing them the rewards of attaining good food safety and hygiene standards. A detailed 'vendor community' development programme should be put forward. This should include: free but compulsory enrolment of vendors on to food safety and hygiene training schemes; appointing street wardens/peer groups who will be responsible for monitoring all vendors operating in the same street / area and making improvements to infrastructural facilities (public toilets, access to safe water, cheap fuel etc). Priority should also be given to issues deemed particularly important by the vendors such as improving their access to microcredit (for example the successes of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh) allowing them to access the means of increasing the longevity of their food; access to fuel efficient technologies and also giving them security in terms of not being harassed by the authorities / moved on from their preferred locations.

Hope my comments are of some help in orienting the food safety related research in the right path.

Kind regards
Dr Sabiha Lageard

56. Kamal Karunagoda, Department of Agriculture, Sri Lanka

- 1. We believe that creating a system of incentives (e.g. constant number of customers/day, vouchers or some sort of recognition mechanism for good practices) is required for motivating the street vendors to improve the informal street food sector. What types of incentives have worked in improving food safety and quality, what types have not worked and why?**

Street food in Sri Lanka is popular among commuters, visitors to urban centers, parks, and many other places where public occasionally gather for various reasons. The common street food items include: fruits, snacks, gram, breakfast, lunch, dinner, peanuts, boiled green cobs of maize, ice cream, herbal drinks, fruit juices, tea, etc. This system is not recognized by the formal institutions. The advantage of street food is that it is much cheaper than formal sources and thus affordable and accessible to poor and also to non-poor. It makes food accessible in places where consumers have no other option and in environments where demand for food is high. Sometimes, specialization provides food vendors competitive advantage over other available options due to price, taste and quality. It also provides diversity to food available in the market.

- 2. Are there examples of concrete measures promoted by local authorities to recognize and increase visibility of street food vendors producing safer and/or more nutritious food and how have these actions influenced consumers' choices towards food? Have similar initiatives been prompted directly by street food vendors associations? How?**

No serious actions have been taken to improve the service of street food vendors. Street vendors are in a disadvantage position due to social taboo of unhygienic, low-quality food and lack of institutional support to improve their business. These vendors also come under the purview of Food Act of Sri Lanka. Street vendors are not organized themselves and operate individually. Street vendors are often charged by the police, public health officers, and local government officials. However, considerable number of people is served by these street vendors.

- 3. How can cultural norms and practices related to vendors' and consumers' behaviour regarding the food they prepare be strengthened and addressed within local contexts? What new**

mechanisms can be put in place to raise peoples' awareness on the consequences of their eating habits? New advertising methods which have been proven of being effective (e.g. alternative marketing strategies)?

Street foods are being served for niche markets (travelers, busy housewives, commuters in public transport, isolated public places, and busy streets, etc. Though they are considered unhygienic, no comparison are available vis a vis accepted standard or the available formal places. Some vendors are specialized in traditional foods and those are very popular among the target groups. Some vendors cater to nutritional needs and some vendors promote healthy foods (herbal drinks, fresh fruit drinks). Training of these vendors on hygienic practices would provide ample benefits to consumers. Institutional recognition and capacity development are essential to make their service valuable to the community.

4. Despite recognizing the importance of street foods, local authorities often appear weak in being able to control the potential negative impacts (unsafe food, pollution, disruptions in traffic etc). Can you inform us of innovative and successful policy approaches implemented by local authorities in this regard?

Limited interventions have been taken by public, private and NPOs. My personal observation during the past few decades is that vendors themselves have taken many innovative steps to improve the quality of products and marketing strategies while some vendors still prefer traditional style. Some adopt eco-friendly method (traditional style), modern hygienic packing, labeling, dress code, etc. Some corporate sellers use street vendors to sell their products (ice cream) by providing basic facilities such as bicycle, cooling box, credit to purchase products, uniform, etc. Sometime people complain about the nuisance that street vendors make in public places and authorities have taken steps to forbid street vendors in some places considering the convenience of the public. However, interventions can do significant impact on this unrecognized sector to provide safe food to consumers and also to provide self employment opportunity that cater to the needs and wants of the community.

57. Xavier Medina, Open University of Catalonia, Spain

Street food is particularly important in developing countries. It's normally cheap, quick, "traditional" (it is: inside the social and cultural local food patterns) and sometimes nutritionally healthy. Different people (including teenagers and students) uses everyday this kind of food because its price, availability and taste.

Motivating the street vendors to improve the informal street food sector is a very important factor, but public regulation is also capital. Food specialization provides sometimes competitive advantage over other available options due to quality, diversity and price. The public sector must anyway inspects regularly, giving visible certificates of food safety. Interventions can do significant impact on this unrecognized sector to provide safe food to consumers.

Another important factor is the public image. As one of our colleagues said before, vendors themselves have taken many innovative steps to improve the quality of products and direct marketing strategies offering also an hygienic image, significant for the consumers.

Dr. F. Xavier Medina
Director
Food Systems, Culture and Society

58. Concluding remarks by Giorgio Nicolò

Dear FSN Forum members,

Our Forum discussion on street food vending has come to a closure.

Firstly, I would like to thank you all again for the number of valuable contributions posted and the dynamism of this discussion. I hope that the broad spectrum of the questions posed in the topic, has allowed all the participants to share their diverse experience and knowledge on this multifaceted issue.

As some of you pointed out, the discussion mainly concentrated on the hygienic and regulatory aspects of the problem and less on other ways to prompt a durable change. Many participants mentioned training materials on good hygiene practices, the use of the “five keys to safer food” suggested by WHO, among others, as an effective way of improving the food safety. Undoubtedly, “practical hands on training and education” emerge as the main path leading towards safer and more nutritious food.

I believe that there is additional work to do and less emphasis has been put on the questions dealing with creating concrete incentives and innovative methods of raising consumers’ awareness. This is not a surprise as the safety of street food has always been the main concern for food safety actors due to the high volume of people consuming food on the street on a daily basis. Much of the work done on this issue reflects this problem. However, as pointed out by more than one participant, street vendors are not only a source of public disruption and public health threat but also, they come from extremely vulnerable realities, and as such, require incentives to improve the quality of the service they provide. The lack of shared experiences on this aspect is a clear signal that more efforts and resources need to be allocated to address this problem from a different angle, in order to achieve sustainable changes.

Lastly, I can see that the Forum has disclosed a community of professionals working on street food vending. There is quite a heterogeneous set of expertise: nutritionists, agronomists, economists, microbiologists, professionals working in the private sector, each and every one of us with his specific ideas to share. This, once again, highlights the need for a multidisciplinary approach and will hopefully lead to collaborations and joint actions while limiting the number of duplicating initiatives in our future works.

I will personally follow up on several experiences and many of your suggestions will be of great use to focus the scope of my research. As I mentioned at the beginning of this discussion, in the next weeks I will be carrying out an assessment study on street food vending and my aims and objectives are very much in line with what has been shared by colleagues from Bangladesh. I therefore thank them in advance for posting the findings of their study on “institutionalization of the street food sector and capacity strengthening” and I will definitely contact them for more feedback.

Many thanks again for all of your contributions and I look forward to seeing how the discourse of street food vending evolves,

Giorgia Nicolò
FAO Regional Office for Africa, Ghana

Post discussion feedback

Salome Yesudas

Hello

thanks for the summary, I think we should also look at how can we protect them from big malls / MNCs . MNCs are competing with these people, can we think of any protection measures? When they are replaced with MNCs what options do they have? How do they survive? These are some haunting questions ...

Sincerely,
Salome Yesudas

K V Peter

It is a very informative initiative to have conducted a discussion on street foods. Street foods are the main force of living by both food vendors and city / urban dwellers and migrants both male, female and children. In many cases foods are prepared before the eyes of customers. They are served hot. The concerns of personnel hygiene of vendors, cleanliness of vessels and surroundings are all pointed out. Need for registration and certification by local public health authorities was indicated. But the photographs given are of vegetable vendors rather than food vendors. Of course two photographs are food vendors. There is need to collect as many photographs as possible from different countries. In developed countries, street food restaurants are meeting places for lovers, senior citizens and even big politicians. Come to Kerala and you will see street food vendors along the National High Ways catering to the need of day and night travellers.

K V Peter

Md. Kamrul Islam

Dear Giorgia Nicolò,

Many many thanks to you for raising this issue.

My gratitude also for publishing my comments in forum website.

I earnestly hope that your mission will be successful and your noble vision will insure the safe food for many poor peoples.

Thank you again.

With best regards,

Md. Kamrul Islam
Research Doctorate Student
University of Naples "Parthenope",
Department of Environmental Sciences,
NAPLES – ITALY

N.Rajavel

Dear Comrades,
Really I am happy to join this forum and share the information regarding to all about the food security and nutrition.
with regards

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N.Rajavel
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Social Work
Bharathidasan University
Khajamalai Campus

John Andrew Siame

This topic is very important and has been a subject of many studies and discussions. Much as I appreciate the contribution of street foods to the nutrition of general populations, in many African Countries, I find it difficult to accept calls to maintain the trade on the streets where the environment is often very unsafe for traders and their clients. Street food traders should be moved to safer trading areas and the kinds of foods they trade in should be limited to those that cannot be contaminated easily and all food safety regulations should be enforced.

Dr John Andrew Siame
Consultant Farming Systems Agronomist
Lusaka, Zambia.