

# INFORMAL FOOD VENDORS AND FOOD SAFETY IN WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

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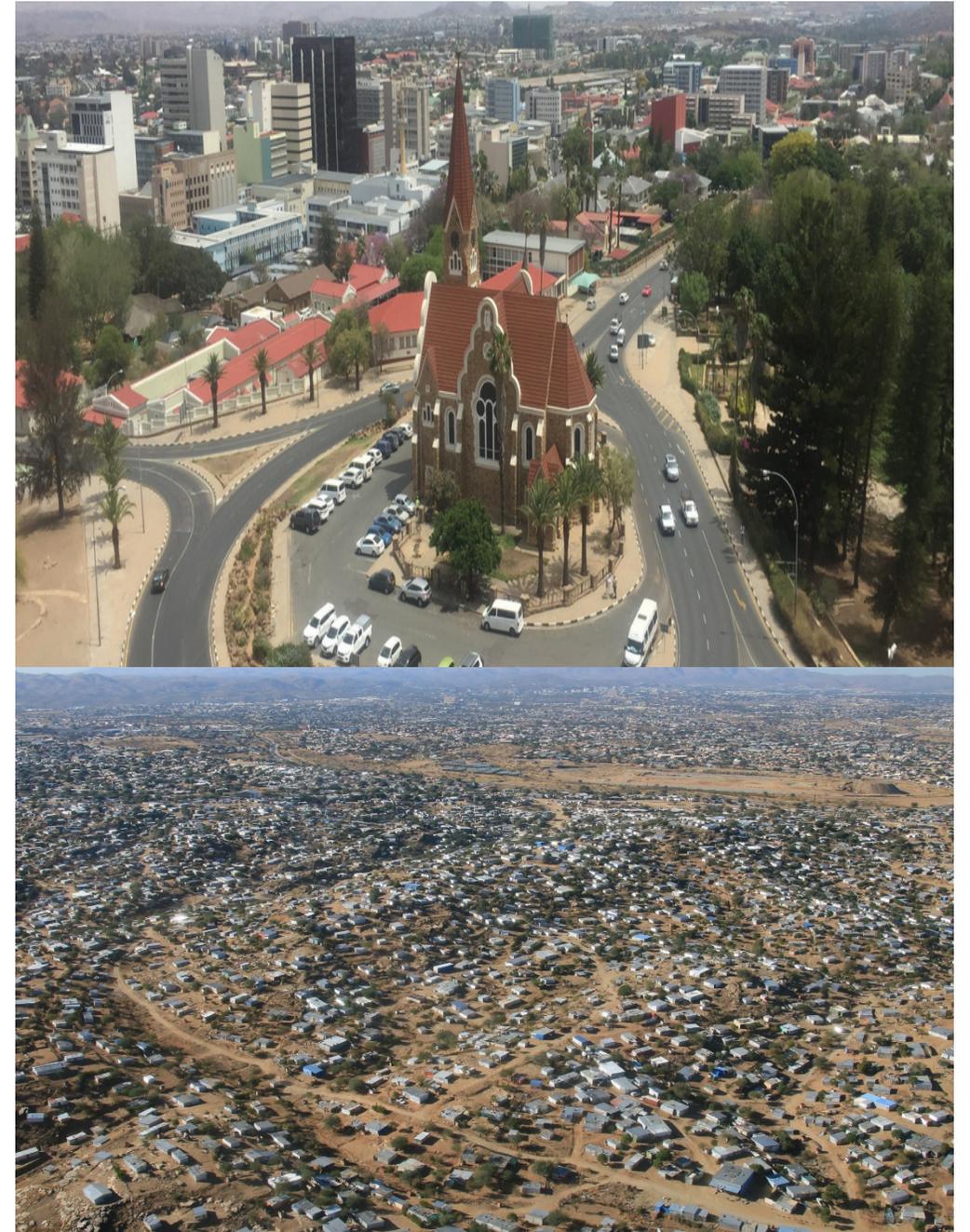
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# Introduction

- “In order to understand cities properly, we need to look at them through food” (Steel 2008, 10).
- Not all cities are alike. Therefore, policies and strategies to address urban poverty need to be responsive to the needs of cities
- Seeing the city through “*informal food system*” opens up new ways to understand poverty, and its interplay with use of urban space and with governance; and,
- Understanding the food safety of informal foods is a precondition for developing preventive policy response (Dioxin, et al. 2007



# Introduction

- Informal food vendors have demonstrated that there is a mutual beneficial coexistence with the supermarkets (Battersby, 2016)
- Informal food vendors are filling a gap created by the absence of supermarkets in the informal areas of Windhoek (Crush, 2012)
- Low income households mainly source food from the informal sector (AFSUN 2008, Tacoli 2017, Skinner 2017, Studies 2016)
- Informal food vendors creates access to traditional foods in urban areas (Fraser 2014, Rane 2011)



## Introduction

- The 2016 Supermarket survey in Windhoek was conducted with the aim to examine the impact of South African Supermarkets (patronage patterns, household food security, its relationship with informal markets and food vendors).
- KII with informal food vendors to assess: perception on poverty, experience with food sourcing, interaction with wholesales/ supermarkets. Examine they types of products and challenges
- *Document the observable food safety issues among food vendors*



# Introduction

- Namibia: 2.5 mil; 48% of the population is urban
- Windhoek has an estimated population of 400 000, 60% of the population live in the informal settlements
- 28% - unemployment rate for Windhoek and 57% were in informal employment (primarily women, food vendors)
- With an urbanization rate of 4.2%



# Levels of Food Insecurity in Windhoek

**Table 1: Food security prevalence in Windhoek compared to other African cities**

	<b>Food Secure</b>	<b>Mildly Food Secure</b>	<b>Moderately Food Insecure</b>	<b>Severely Food Insecure</b>
Windhoek, Namibia 2016	16.4 (n=141)	3.4 (n=29)	13.1 (n=113)	67.1 (n=577)
Windhoek, Namibia 2008	18	5	14	63
Harare, Zimbabwe 2008	2	3	24	72
Lusaka, Zambia 2008	4	3	24	69
Maseru, Lesotho 2008	5	6	25	65
Maputo, Mozambique 2008	5	9	32	54
Manzini, Swaziland 2008	6	3	13	79
Msunduzi, South Africa 2008	7	6	27	60
Gaborone, Botswana 2008	12	6	19	63
Cape Town, South Africa 2008	15	5	12	68
Blantyre, Malawi 2008	34	15	30	21
Johannesburg, South Africa 2008	44	14	15	27

# Frequency of sourcing food from different outlets

	% of HH	Frequency of purchase from the source (%)				
		At least five days per week	At least once per week	At least once per month	At least once in six months	At least once per year
Supermarket	96.5	4.5	16.5	65.7	12.4	0.8
Small shop	18.6	11.9	60.0	22.5	5.6	0.0
Fast Food/Take Away	15.5	5.1	39.4	48.5	4.8	2.3
Restaurant	5.8	8.2	49.0	36.7	4.1	2.0
Open Market	49.8	17.6	46.2	19.5	16.2	0.5
Spaza/tuck shop	19.4	50.9	41.2	7.3	0.6	0.0
Street vendor/trader/hawker	29.2	49.8	33.7	6.8	9.6	0.0

## Activities observed as safety concerns

- Highlight potential risk of health importance to the safety of consumers
- Emphasis placed on Environmental Health other than, chemical and microbiological
- It is important to look at hazards for the whole spectrum of street food vending (production to consumption) – limitation
- Food preparation; handling and Vending
- *Safety issues*
- Transportation – moving slaughtered meat from the nearby commercial farms - either in open bakkies, plastic bags, whilst grilling: the meat is not covered, nor refrigerated; inappropriate infrastructure; lack of slaughter houses/facilities – done openly



## Activities observed as safety concerns...

- Distance from where food is prepared/ originates:
  - Female food vendors passionately narrates how early they wake up or how late they go to sleep in order to prepare food. Thus food is prepared ahead of vending, time in hours differs greatly
  - Meat retailed in open markets are placed on open wood – difficult to wash, etc.
  - Overheating/Reheating and uncovered food when vending – food may lose essential nutrients
- Use of leftover perishables and meat products {storage, etc.}



## Activities observed as safety concerns...

- Preparation of home made flour (no standard method and hygiene of area of initial preparation)
- Diversion from standard method – different colours; texture; may influence end product



## Activities observed as safety concerns...

- Low water usage (cooking, cutting, chopping, serving; washing of dishes, utensils including knives for cutting; in-between- cleaning, preparation and serving using bare hands; surface cleaning; utensils not washed with soap solution)
- Fermentation process – pH level increases greatly and fermented drink (Oshikundu), becomes more alcoholic at
- Exposure to direct sun rays – fresh produce' shelving period maybe shortened, tomatoes, bananas, apples – go bad; some vendors follow construction sites



# Conclusion

- Nearness to customers is the target of street food vendors and this places them in direct conflict with municipality as these sites lack basic facilities e.g. toilets, hand washing facilities; potable water; drainage system and waste disposal
- Where these are provided for by the municipality, they are inadequate and congested
- There is urgent need for local governance to consider urban food policy and planning which encompass the entire food system, especially the informal food vendors.



Thank you

