

# Local Public Markets: Critical to Achieving a Sustainable Food System





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# Key Messages:

- Local public markets play an important role in communities and are a critical part of a sustainable food system.
- Markets are important for the health and wellbeing of communities and are an important way cities can help achieve the UN Food Summit's five Action Tracks.
- Formal and informal markets are well positioned to respond to the needs of low-income residents by allowing prices to be negotiated, providing credit and selling in smaller quantities.
- Markets are important for urban food access because they can be located within neighbourhoods and within walking distance of residents.
- A high prevalence of formal and informal vendors, including mobile vendors, influences what people buy and increases fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Neighbourhood markets contribute to reducing food waste by encouraging more frequent shopping trips, which results in customers buying smaller amounts.
- Markets reduce food loss and waste by sourcing locally produced, seasonal food, which reduces the distance food must travel.
- Markets influence both what local farmers grow and what is sold, which increases access to healthy, fresh food.
- Markets encourage fruit and vegetable diversity, which improves biodiversity and reduces environmental degradation.
- Both formal and informal markets in urban settings are an important source of employment in cities as they contribute to local jobs, encourage entrepreneurship, and give workers control and flexibility over their work.
- Formal and informal markets contribute to the resilience of cities by encouraging local economies, supporting local farmers, and creating jobs.
- Markets provide the locations within neighbourhoods for all members of a community, regardless of age, gender, or income, to interact and build community trust, which is key to building resilience.
- Markets can repair and react more quickly in times of stress and breakage, which builds resilience in cities.

# Introduction

Local public markets have long been central to community life and are a vital component of sustainable food systems. They support healthy environments and promote nutritious diets by making it easier for people to access fresh, affordable foods, such as fruits and vegetables. As countries undergo the nutrition transition, in which traditional diets are increasingly replaced by energy-dense, highly processed foods, the role of markets has become even more important as, in many cities around the world, markets are the primary source of healthy food. Beyond food access, markets contribute to community well-being in other important ways: they provide livelihoods as key trading hubs, foster social interaction by serving as neighbourhood gathering spaces, and strengthen the connection between rural producers and urban consumers.

In 2022, around 735 million people were facing chronic hunger and 2.4 billion people were moderately or severely food insecure<sup>1</sup>. Global progress toward ending hunger has been set back by several major crises: the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly impacted diet quality and food security globally<sup>2,3</sup>, the Ukraine-Russia War, which disrupted cereal harvest exports<sup>4,5</sup>, and growing international tensions. As a result, that path to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture<sup>6</sup>—is becoming increasingly difficult. At the current pace, the world is not on track to meet this goal by 2030.



## SDG 2:

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

# UN Food Systems Summit

The Food Systems Summit was convened in 2021 as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Bold actions within the food system are needed to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems. The Summit identified five Action Tracks to help deliver this bold change:



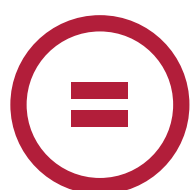
**Action Track 1: Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for All**



**Action Track 2: Sustainable Consumption**



**Action Track 3: Nature Positive Introduction**



**Action Track 4: Advance Equitable Livelihood**



**Action Track 5: Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stress**

Transforming the food system is a powerful way to make progress toward all 17 SDGs.<sup>7</sup>

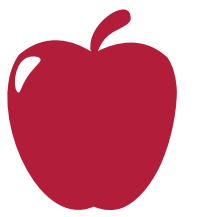


# Local Public Markets: An Opportunity

Local public food markets are an integral part of the food environment and a type of shared public space that provides healthy and nutritious foods for communities while also acting as a social place and a workplace.<sup>8</sup> Food environments refer to the elements of the built environment that help maintain good nutrition and reduce chronic disease in neighbourhoods. It encompasses the consumers' needs and food availability, affordability, desirability and convenience. With the recent popularity of energy-dense foods being sold worldwide, the food environment is changing, making the role of markets in communities even more critical.

This document highlights the value markets can have on the health and wellbeing of communities and articulates the links to the five Action Tracks. For this paper, we are defining “market” broadly to include markets that are both public and privately owned, wet markets, formal markets, informal markets, farmers' markets, and clusters of informal vendors that sell food. This paper will be used to inform HealthBridge's response to the SDGs in general, and international processes such as the UN Food Systems Summit among others. It will also be used to provide HealthBridge's local partners with the background necessary to actively engage with their national and local governments on markets. Although these five Action Tracks are considered separately, they are interrelated and progress in one area depends on progress in the other areas.







Ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition and reducing the incidence of non-communicable diseases is the focus of Action Track 1.<sup>9</sup> In 2022, 2.5 billion adults were overweight, while 390 million were underweight.<sup>10</sup> Also in 2022, 149 million children under 5 were estimated to be stunted, 45 million wasted, and 37 million overweight.<sup>10</sup> According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly half of deaths among children under 5 years of age are linked to undernutrition and most of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>10</sup>

To achieve the goal of Action Track 1, all people must have access to sufficient quantities of affordable and safe food products that meet nutritional needs and food preferences at all times.<sup>11</sup> “Adequate food” means food must satisfy dietary needs, should be safe for human consumption and free from contaminants, and should be culturally acceptable.<sup>12</sup> Despite global efforts, the number of people facing hunger is increasing. A combination of factors continues to hinder progress toward ending hunger and malnutrition. The cost of healthy diets and the consistently high levels of income inequality mean that approximately 3 billion people, especially the poor, are unable to afford to purchase healthy foods. In addition, conflict, climate change, economic slowdowns, and the COVID-19 pandemic have all contributed to increasing levels of hunger and malnutrition and it is expected that these challenges will continue to create high levels of hunger and malnutrition into the future.<sup>13</sup>

## **MALNUTRITION:**

The World Health Organization defines malnutrition as the deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person’s intake of energy and/or nutrients. The term malnutrition addresses three broad groups of conditions: undernutrition, which includes wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age) and underweight (low weight-for-age); micronutrient-related malnutrition, which includes micronutrient deficiencies (a lack of vitamins and minerals) or micronutrient excess; and overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some cancers). See '[Malnutrition Fact Sheet](#)' for more information.



For many people living in cities, the problem isn't a lack of food, but rather a lack of resources to access food. Unfortunately, healthy diets often cost more than an unhealthy diet, making a healthy diet unaffordable to large segments of the population. A study from South Africa found that a healthier diet cost 69% more than an unhealthy diet on average. Even when healthy foods are chosen with affordability in mind, a nutritious diet would still cost most families an additional 10–15% of their total household income.<sup>14</sup> A four-country study conducted in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Tanzania, and Bangladesh found that healthy diets cost between \$0.72 and \$1.27/day at a minimum, which puts a healthy diet out of range for large portions of the populations studied.<sup>14</sup> A household study in Hanoi, Vietnam found that 26% of households had borrowed money to buy food a month before the survey<sup>15</sup>. Another study investigated the cost of a healthy diet (based on federal dietary guidelines) across various regions in Vietnam every year between 2016 and 2020<sup>16</sup>. The findings showed that while the lowest-cost healthy diet was within reach for high- and upper-middle-income households, it remained unaffordable for about 70% of low-income households.<sup>16</sup>

To effectively address hunger in the context of widespread poverty, food systems must go beyond simply increasing food supply. They must also ensure that food is affordable and that people have adequate opportunities to earn an income.<sup>17</sup> This paper will return to the income-earning opportunities within the food system later. In terms of affordability, while some factors can be addressed on the production side, many key influences lie within the distribution side of the food system. In fact, it is often distribution—not the farming that produces the food—that determines the final price urban consumers pay for food. Yet, for those with low and unpredictable incomes, even food considered affordable may still be out of reach. In such cases, flexibility in purchasing, such as the ability to buy in small quantities or access credit when needed, becomes essential for people living in poverty.<sup>17</sup>



Both formal and informal markets are well positioned to respond to the needs of lower-income residents and can do so in ways that are impractical for the corporate food sector. There is conflicting information about whether the prices at supermarkets are more or less affordable than at local markets, especially for staple foods.<sup>18</sup> However, in many places it is clear the prices at supermarkets are too high for low-income earners.

**CORPORATE FOOD SECTOR:**

The corporate food sector refers to those private enterprises that grow, buy, process, market, and sell food, including supermarkets.

A study in South Africa found that street vendors were selling vegetables, such as tomatoes, onions and cabbage, at half or one-third the price of the same produce at the supermarket.<sup>19</sup> In Vietnam, less than 3% of those participating in a household study shopped at a supermarket because the prices were too high. Instead, these respondents shopped at informal markets (82%) where they found the prices to be less expensive.<sup>15</sup> In addition to frequently having lower stated prices, markets have an advantage for low-income earners in that they provide the opportunity to negotiate food prices. For example, a study from India found the poor were able to negotiate lower prices with market vendors when compared to wealthier customers.<sup>20</sup> This ability to barter is an advantage that supermarkets are unable to match.

With smaller amounts of money, unstable incomes and limited storage, lower-income residents often make smaller and more frequent purchases. For example, one study found that four out of five people who bought food daily had a household member engaged in temporary or casual labour.<sup>21</sup> Another study in an informal settlement in Cape Town found that only 31% of residents had access to a refrigerator and instead relied on cupboards (49%) and buckets (15%) to store food.<sup>18</sup> The ability to buy in smaller unit sizes is an advantage of markets over supermarkets<sup>22, 17</sup> as the supermarket model is typically pre-packaged food in larger quantities.

Markets have an additional advantage over supermarkets because many formal and informal vendors provide credit opportunities for their regular lower-income customers and this makes purchasing food possible even when households run out of money. Although this does not directly impact the affordability of food, having the ability to purchase food even when incomes are low, makes food much more accessible to lower-income residents.<sup>22</sup>

When considering food security, ensuring access is often assumed to depend on income. However, access is also spatially determined and the location of food sources is an equally important determinant of urban food security.<sup>22</sup> Physical access to food is largely determined by the distribution of food, which includes the number, type, location, and accessibility of food retail along with people's overall mobility. The location of food outlets is a crucial element to increase access to healthy, fresh foods for community members. When deciding where to shop, consumers are strongly influenced by how far they must travel, with "proximity of the market/shop" and "time-savings" often given as reasons for visiting a particular food outlet.<sup>23</sup> The closer a food outlet is to where a person lives or works, the better the physical access to food, which increases the convenience. This is especially true for low-income residents as they are least likely to own a motor vehicle and must walk, cycle or take public transit to buy food.<sup>21</sup> In one study, location was important to more people than price or quality.<sup>24</sup> A literature review looking at research across the globe found that lower-income populations were more likely to experience limitations to accessing healthier food options due to transportation cost and lack of public transport access, an issue that exacerbates mobility issues.<sup>25</sup>

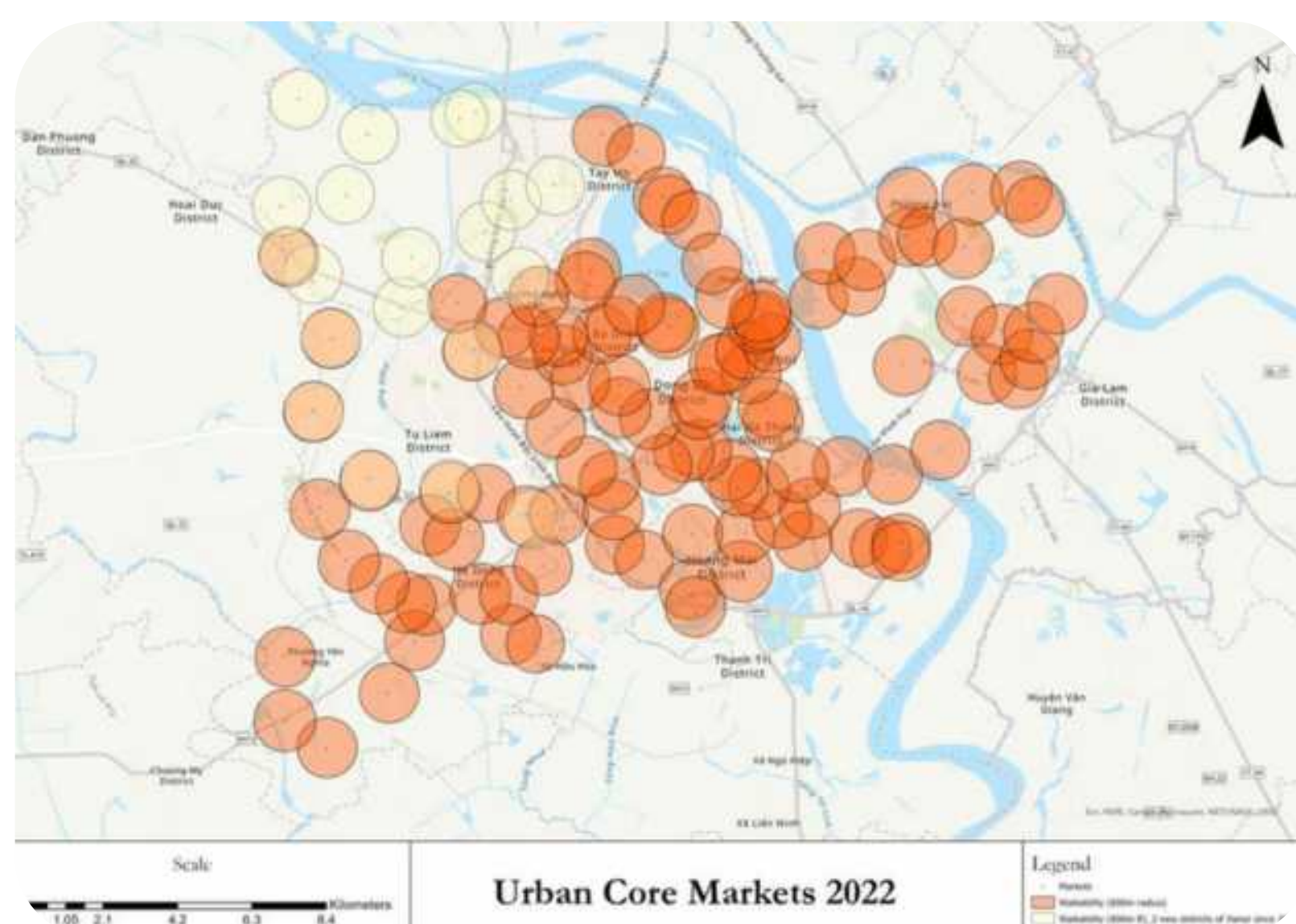
Given that women are the typical purchasers of food for the household in most countries, reducing women's time burdens is often discussed as a key principle to improving nutrition.<sup>14</sup> The time needed to obtain and prepare food represents a significant time burden for women, who are often juggling the demands of home and work. When food outlets, especially outlets that sell healthy, fresh food, are not located within walkable distance to residents' homes, access to food is poor, thereby creating inequalities in access to food, which also increases the burden on women. A study conducted in rural Rwanda found that women's dietary diversity decreased as the distance from their household to the nearest market increased, and was also negatively associated with higher levels of food insecurity.<sup>26</sup>

Proximity to basic services was shown to be especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cities throughout the world were restricting people's mobility and requiring people to stay close to home, which means the ability to shop close to home became critically important. A study mapped the local markets in Arusha and revealed that 15 of the 25 wards/neighbourhoods that constitute the city boundaries have neither formally nor informally established marketplaces. The spatial inequality in the distribution of local markets compels the majority of residents, both vendors and buyers, to spend more time on motorized transport to reach the nearest market. With COVID-19 preventive measures that included restricted urban transport, curfews and lockdowns, households purchasing their food in small quantities had difficulty accessing the main markets.<sup>27</sup>

The corporate food sector typically relies on large catchment areas that are often only accessible to residents by driving. This makes them an unsuitable choice to address the food access inequalities that exist within cities. Supermarkets are primarily influenced by market-based factors and therefore locate in the most profitable areas, which typically means higher-income communities.<sup>28</sup> A systematic literature review examining global research on challenges to accessing a healthy diet found that low-income urban neighbourhoods are less likely to have local supermarkets.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, when supermarkets do exist nearby, they tend to offer a more limited selection of healthy food options.<sup>25</sup> A mapping study in Cape Town found the distribution of supermarkets is highly unequal with low-income neighbourhoods having drastically lower supermarket densities. The lack of supermarkets in low-income neighbourhoods reduced access overall and the distance between low-income and high-income neighbourhoods created additional inequalities in access for the urban poor. The supermarkets that did exist in low-income areas typically stocked less healthy foods than those in wealthier areas, which means the supermarkets, even when they were accessible, did not increase access to healthy foods.<sup>18</sup>



Markets, however, have the benefit of being smaller in scale and can therefore be located within neighbourhoods and within walking distance of residents. Hanoi, Vietnam, a city that was built around its public markets, has over 400 markets of varying sizes that are easily accessible to residents.<sup>29</sup> Barcelona is another example of a city that has built its neighbourhoods around local public markets. They have a thriving network of around 43 permanent public markets serving 73 neighbourhoods.<sup>30</sup> A case study in Dar es Salaam found the location of the market, located in a densely populated informal settlement, made food accessible to the many people who could walk to the market from the surrounding area on their way to and from places of work or trade.<sup>17</sup>



#### Markets in Hanoi:

Over 400 diverse markets are embedded throughout the city of Hanoi, Vietnam, making them highly accessible to community members.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, informal vendors are often not constrained to specific geographical areas as many walk the streets to sell their goods. Research in Nepal demonstrated that the informal vendors walking the streets provided critical access to vegetables in the city.<sup>31</sup> These informal vendors have the opportunity to go to neighbourhoods that might not have enough people to warrant a full-scale market. A recent example in Dhaka, Bangladesh demonstrated the success of a one-day-a-week farmers' market in ensuring access to fresh fruits and vegetables in a lower-income neighbourhood.<sup>32</sup> Results of studies consistently show the importance of the formal and informal vendors in providing access to foods, including fresh produce, in poor, urban food-insecure communities.

A final area to consider under this Action Track is food availability. For people to consume healthy food, healthy food must be available. Studies from the U.S. show that when the food supply is analyzed, it closely matches people's actual diets, which typically does not closely match dietary guidelines.<sup>14</sup> The correlation between food availability and consumption is no doubt bi-directional – people eat what is consumed and what people consume influences what is available. However, it is also obvious that if healthy food is unavailable, people cannot have a healthy diet, even if affordability and location are not issues. In addition to actual availability, perceived availability of healthy food is also important. When people perceive greater access to fruits and vegetables, studies show a higher increase in fruit and vegetable consumption.<sup>14</sup> Markets and informal vendors have better opportunities than supermarkets to increase the perception of availability due to their presence in neighbourhoods and in areas with high pedestrian traffic.

Despite the two-way relationship between food availability and consumption, where people obtain their food has been shown to influence diets, nutrition, and health outcomes.<sup>24</sup> Increasing evidence suggests that supermarkets are driving the shift toward cheap, highly processed foods with little nutritional value.<sup>22</sup> This trend is particularly pronounced in low-income areas, contributing to the creation of obesogenic environments. For example, while many countries have sufficient calories available for their populations, not everyone can access a healthy diet because fruit and vegetable availability falls short of dietary recommendations.<sup>14</sup> One contributing factor is the growing investment in commodities such as staple cereals, soybeans, sunflower, palm oil, and animal-source foods.<sup>14</sup> Such commodities are needed for many of the heavily processed, sugary, fatty, salty foods produced by the corporate food sector, which are sold in supermarkets worldwide. These commodities are key ingredients in many heavily processed, sugary, fatty, and salty foods produced by the corporate food sector and sold in supermarkets worldwide. An observational study spanning 172 countries found that in higher-income nations, animal-source foods are more affordable, whereas in low-income countries, pulses, nuts, seeds, fruits, and vegetables provide a more affordable way to meet nutrient needs.<sup>33</sup> This disparity suggests that higher-income countries tend to invest more resources in animal products compared to fresh produce, reinforcing dietary biases.

However, the presence of numerous formal and informal vendors, including mobile vendors, also shapes purchasing habits and overall nutrition. Research in South Africa found that markets and informal vendors are the main sources of vegetables, supplying over 70% of the vegetables sold.<sup>24</sup>

A study examining household food purchases, diets, and nutrition outcomes found that a higher density of vegetable vendors within 500 meters of a home is linked to greater likelihood of purchasing vegetables and lower overall energy intake. Moreover, the closer these vendors are to the household, the stronger this association becomes.<sup>24</sup> A review of 23 studies found that street foods contribute significantly to the energy and protein intake of residents in developing countries and recommended that street food should be encouraged, provided that they are offering healthy, traditional foods.<sup>18</sup> This contrasts with supermarkets that have made highly processed foods more spatially and economically available, which some have suggested is increasing the nutrition transition in certain countries.<sup>18</sup>



### **Mobile Markets:**

Mobile markets can enhance access for vulnerable populations. Mobile farmers markets in Michigan, US, delivered produce directly to customers and helped reduce transportation-related barriers.<sup>34</sup> These mobile markets were critical in providing access to produce to lower-income and at-risk communities during COVID-19.<sup>35</sup> During the pandemic, a 63% increase in demand for mobile market services were found and a 65% increase in amount of produce were sold from these mobile services.<sup>35</sup>

### **Markets in North America:**

Research suggests that farmers' markets in North America tend to serve higher-income groups. However, the relocation of the Flint Farmers' Market in the US found that lower-income residents constituted a major consumer group at the market once it was relocated to a prominent central location. The results of the project demonstrated that markets can bring healthy food to communities without healthy food access. See [this article](#) for more information.



## ACTION TRACK 2

# Shift to Sustainable Consumption Patterns



Action Track 2 is focused on building consumer demand for sustainably produced food, strengthening local value chains, and promoting the reuse and recycling of food resources, especially among the most vulnerable. This Action Track identifies the need to eliminate wasteful patterns of food consumption. It also seeks to improve nutrition by recognizing the need to encourage people to eat healthy foods that require fewer resources to produce and transport. This creates a significant challenge for the system as, globally, food accounts for 48% of household impacts on land resources and 70% of household impacts on water resources. Consumption of meat, dairy, and processed food is a major contributor to these environmental impacts and is expected to increase with rising incomes.<sup>36</sup>

Worldwide, food waste is a massive problem and is a major contributor to environmental degradation. The UN Environment Program (UNEP) has estimated that roughly 30% of the food produced across the globe is wasted per year.<sup>37</sup> In 2022, 1.05 billion tonnes of food in the retail, food service, and household sectors were wasted, which equates to 132 kilograms per capita per year.<sup>38</sup> In addition, food losses and waste amount to roughly US\$680 billion in industrialized countries and US\$310 billion in developing countries, with fruits and vegetables, followed by roots and tubers, having the highest wastage of any food. Even if just one-fourth of the food currently lost or wasted globally could be saved, it would be enough to feed 870 million hungry people in the world.<sup>39</sup>

Food waste contributes to excess consumption of fresh water and fossil fuels. In addition, decomposing food creates methane and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which contributes to climate change. For example, in the US it was found that per capita food waste, which represents 150 trillion kcal per year, accounts for more than one quarter of total freshwater consumption and 300 million barrels of oil per year<sup>40</sup> Unconsumed food accounts for approximately 18% of total solid waste in municipal landfills in the US.<sup>41</sup>



Food loss typically occurs during harvest due to financial constraints, poor infrastructure, inadequate handling skills, and the lack of mechanization, packaging, and storage facilities. In contrast, food waste happens at the end of the food chain—at retail and consumer levels—and is largely driven by the behaviors of consumers and retailers. Urbanization and dietary diversification, such as increased consumption of meat and dairy products, are closely linked to rising food waste in these later stages. Additionally, the shift from shorter, locally focused supply chains to complex global supply networks has introduced new challenges for managing food waste, as distributing food over long distances requires more intricate infrastructure.<sup>42</sup>

Markets can reduce food waste by providing informal vendors with fruits and vegetables they can sell outside of the markets and closer to households. This collaboration helps reduce food loss in markets and also helps to reduce waste within households because consumers can buy what they need closer to home.<sup>42</sup> Markets that are located in neighbourhoods promote more frequent shopping trips, which results in customers buying smaller amounts and this contributes to reducing the likelihood of food being wasted.<sup>43</sup> A study in Seoul found that the type of food retailer predicted over-purchasing and trip characteristics. They concluded that the supermarket format contributed to household food waste and that over-purchasing and food waste could be reduced by short travel times and frequent trips<sup>44</sup>, which is a feature of most purchasing trips at markets

Sustainable food consumption is the use of food “that responds to basic needs and brings a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations”<sup>45</sup> In addition to reducing food loss and waste, a review identified several other examples of sustainable food consumption including increasing consumption of plant-based foods, decreasing meat consumption and opting for seasonal products.<sup>46</sup> Sustainable food consumption also has the benefit of being a nutritious and healthy diet.



Sustainable food consumption is also closely linked to how and where food is produced, making the role of small-scale farms particularly important. There's increasing evidence that small-scale farms require fewer resources to produce food. Small-scale farms, typically thought of as less than 2 hectares, operate only around 12% of all agricultural land, and produce roughly 35% of the world's food. However, small-scale farms occupy a much larger share of agricultural land than the global average in regions such as South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>47</sup> Although, empirical evidence on the farm size–productivity relationship is ambiguous, with some studies suggesting larger-scale farms are more productive and some studies showing small-scale farms are more productive, the expansion of large-scale industrial agriculture comes with a high environmental cost. Small-scale farming is much more likely to take into account local landscapes and ecosystems and is more likely to engage in nature-based practices such as organic agriculture, crop rotation, and integrated pest management permaculture<sup>48</sup>

Markets are well positioned to connect to small-scale farmers. Evidence suggests that the corporate food sector requires farmers to adhere to conditions that support larger-scale producers, and this forces small-scale farmers out of competition.<sup>28</sup> An enabling environment for small-scale farmers includes having trading, processing, and retailing operations of a similar scale and run by people with common cultures.<sup>19</sup> Such conditions exist in markets. By sourcing locally produced food, markets can potentially reduce food loss and waste because travel time is decreased while selling more seasonal food, an important component of a sustainable diet.

Unfortunately, current levels of fruit and vegetable availability cannot achieve sustainable dietary recommendations for the population. The availability of pulses in Africa, for example, is about one-third of the estimated needs.<sup>14</sup> Instead, oil crops such as soybean, sunflower, and palm oil, needed for heavily processed foods, along with animal source foods have increased substantially<sup>14</sup> and this is, in part, due to the rise of supermarkets. Research suggests that corporate food retailers, such as supermarkets, are fostering the nutrition transition towards more highly processed foods and that the growth of supermarkets in Asia, Africa, and Latin America is correlated with increased consumption of ultra-processed foods even after controlling for income and other socioeconomic variables.<sup>49</sup> Although part of this increase may be due to consumer preference, consumption decisions are heavily influenced by external factors such as availability, as discussed above, as well as advertising and product placement.<sup>14</sup> It is well known that supermarkets charge a premium to corporate food producers to place their products in such a way as to encourage their purchase.

Markets, on the other hand, are also well positioned to influence both what is grown and what is sold. If the food environment signals to consumers what to purchase, what is being signalled in a local market is nutritious healthy food. A study investigating farmers' market perceptions in Tuscany, Italy, found that consumers on average reported that farmers' markets positively impact their consumption behaviours and diet compared to other food outlets.<sup>50</sup>

Small-scale farmers often achieve better returns by selling to local markets and informal traders rather than through the corporate food system. This is partly because supermarkets demand larger volumes and standardized products—requirements that impose higher costs in both time and money.<sup>28</sup> In addition, smaller-scale farmers are more easily able to shift their products to meet demand and market vendors can provide the necessary feedback for the farms to accommodate those preferences. Examples from Africa and Asia show that campaigns highlighting traditional foods as both nutritious and culturally significant can shift public perception and transform traditional vegetables from being seen as food for the poor to being valued and sought-after.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Solar Power in Markets:**

There are promising innovations looking at how solar powered cold rooms could dramatically reduce food loss and waste in Sub-Saharan Africa. The cold rooms have the potential to significantly improve livelihoods for smallholder farmers by reducing the post-harvest loss of crops, reducing waste at the markets. See [this article](#) for more information.



**ACTION TRACK 3**

# Boost Nature Positive Production





Action Track 3 is focused on reducing biodiversity loss, pollution, water use, soil degradation and greenhouse gas emissions and identifies the need to eliminate wasteful patterns of food consumption. This Action Track underscores the need to focus on small farms and small-scale enterprises and links to Action Track 2 in that it is intended to support food systems that reduce food losses and other negative environmental impacts.<sup>51</sup>

Agriculture's contribution to environmental degradation is well known. Farms have become increasingly simplified ecologically over the years, in part by reducing the number of crop species.<sup>52</sup> This trend is called 'genetic erosion'.<sup>53</sup> According to the FAO, an estimated 250,000 plant varieties exist, yet fewer than 3% are currently used in agriculture.<sup>53</sup> Today, the global food supply relies on approximately 150 plant species, with just 12 of them providing about 75% of the world's food.<sup>53</sup> More than half of global food energy comes from just three crops—rice, wheat, and maize—often referred to as "mega-crops".<sup>53</sup> This reduction in agricultural diversity relies on constant human intervention and has resulted in the over-reliance on pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and machinery. Human intervention has essentially replaced the ecosystem services formerly provided by agriculture itself.<sup>54</sup> Pesticides and fertilizers can poison fresh water, marine ecosystems, air and soil while remaining in the environment for generations.

The agricultural sector uses approximately 70% of the planet's fresh water<sup>55</sup>, and is responsible for about 70% of the pollution in oceans and freshwater systems due to eutrophication caused by agricultural practice.<sup>55</sup> Around 26% of global greenhouse gas emissions are because of food production practices and 50% of the habitable land in the world is used for agriculture.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, clearing land for agricultural production is a major contributor to climate change, as the carbon stored in intact forests is released when they are cut or burned.<sup>56</sup>

However, evidence shows that diversified farming systems can significantly reduce many of the environmental harms linked to large-scale, input-intensive agriculture.<sup>54</sup>

#### **EUTROPHICATION:**

Eutrophication occurs when an area has an increased amount of nutrients, resulting in more plant and algae growth in bodies of water. An excess amount of nutrients in water leads to a low-oxygen (hypoxic) state that can have detrimental effects on fish and sea vegetation, reducing critical habitats for life under water.<sup>57</sup> When farmers use chemical fertilizers and animal manure, excess nutrients from this practice can affect nearby downstream water quality.<sup>58</sup>

Diversified farming includes ensuring small crop field sizes, increased length of edges between different crop types and between crops, and increased crop diversity, which refers to planting more types of crops.<sup>59</sup> Traditional cropping systems are known for being genetically diverse and this provides at least partial resistance to diseases that are specific to particular strains of crops and allows farmers to work with different soil types and micro-climates.<sup>60</sup> For example, farmers in the Andes cultivate approximately 50 potato varieties in their fields.<sup>60</sup> More species with smaller fields result in a range of species and a positive effect of crop diversity on wildlife.<sup>59</sup> In addition, diverse agricultural landscapes offer important ecosystem services, including increased availability of plant products, enhanced resistance to invasive species, improved soil fertility, and better regulation of pests and pathogens.<sup>59</sup>

Management practices such as intercropping, cover cropping and crop rotation can maintain crop yields, and enhance food security, nutrition, and livelihoods while contributing substantially to the global food supply. Management practices that improve soil structure and stability also enhance water infiltration and retention. This helps stabilize yields against annual environmental fluctuations and can help during disruptions caused by serious environmental events such as droughts and hurricanes. The resulting biodiversity performs additional ecosystem services such as the recycling of nutrients, controlling microclimates, and regulating pests.<sup>54</sup> Unlike industrial farms, small-scale farmers rely on relatively low-cost, low-technology, knowledge-based methods that are well suited to maintaining and enhancing diversity and these methods are accessible to the small-scale farms that make up the majority of farms worldwide.<sup>54</sup> The use of machinery and chemicals may make the transition to methods that support diversity more challenging for industrial farms.<sup>54</sup> When farms are large, economies of scale discourage crop diversity.<sup>61</sup>



Markets, as opposed to supermarkets, are often the place where small farms sell their goods. It is because of this close connection that there is a clear and consistent link between market access and crop diversification.<sup>61</sup> Markets tend to promote fruit and vegetable diversity and this is one of the main strategies adopted by farmers as a way of responding to the local food and farm-to-fork movements.<sup>61</sup> A study of food retail stores in Viladecans, Spain, explored agrobiodiversity and found a high degree of seasonality in the produce available at short food supply chains, such as farmers' markets. This seasonality reflects alignment with the region's natural growing cycles and indicates a commitment to preserving agricultural biodiversity.<sup>62</sup> The farmers' markets were seen to have a very high proportion of locally sourced species (98%) and were found to have greater diversity in produce compared to other food retail environments.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, a motivator for farmers to sell at farmers' markets in Bologna, Italy, was being able to contribute to increasing biodiversity.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, selling through markets or small-scale vendors enables more direct relationships between farmers and customers, allowing farmers to receive valuable feedback and adjust their supply to better meet consumer preferences. This direct feedback impacts crop mix.<sup>61</sup> For example, a Swedish study found that one farm selling at a local market grew 169 vegetable species while another grew 115, resulting in larger fields being divided into smaller parts. Such diversity in crops and smaller field sizes created a diversity of habitats that supported wild flora and fauna.<sup>64</sup> The study demonstrated that vegetable farmers had a strong interest in diversifying their vegetable production, in part because of demand and in part to optimize the conditions of their farm, and it was their access to the local markets that made this diversification possible.<sup>64</sup> In addition, farmers report that customer feedback was critical for farmer satisfaction and local selling made it possible for smaller farmers to stay in business without increasing in scale.<sup>64</sup>

Efforts to incorporate small-farm products into supermarket supply chains have been largely unsuccessful and, as a result, supermarket chains typically procure their fresh food from a small number of larger producers.<sup>21</sup> One study in South Africa found that one of the leading supermarket chains procures 80% of its fresh produce from just ten agribusinesses versus traditional markets which are an important source of income for small-scale farmers.<sup>21</sup>

Markets, however, are hospitable to small farms that may experience challenges selling to supermarkets or wholesalers.<sup>21</sup> Markets, including farmers' markets, have a demonstrated benefit for small-scale farmers, which can lead to stronger rural economies characterized by numerous small farms.<sup>65</sup> Prices received for the produce sold directly to consumers can be substantially higher than typical wholesale prices while still being below supermarket prices.<sup>65</sup>

In addition, growing a diversity of crops allows farmers to spread the risk through more products and sell them in different markets, which allows farmers to deal with disturbances in the market such as price volatility.<sup>61</sup> A study investigating motivators for farmers to sell at farmers' markets in Bologna, Italy, found that a factor driving farmers' to participate in farmers markets included being able to control the price for their produce according to what they deem is fair, compared to other sales outlets.<sup>63</sup>



**ACTION TRACK 4 Advance Equitable Livelihoods** 



## ACTION TRACK 4 Advance Equitable Livelihoods

Action Track 4 is focused on eliminating poverty by promoting productive and decent work for all actors in the food system. This Action Track is interested in reducing the risks associated with the food system, supporting entrepreneurship, and reducing inequitable access to resources. The foundation of Action Track 4 is to improve the social protections in the food system and “leave no one behind”.<sup>66</sup>

According to the World Bank, the food system is a major source of employment in developing countries, with 65% of working adults living in poverty relying on the agriculture sector as of 2016.<sup>67</sup> Currently, it’s estimated that food systems in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia will account for more than 70% of total jobs in 2025.<sup>67</sup>

The food system, in its entirety, includes everything from the farmer who produces the food, to the trucker who transports the food, to the vendors, restaurants and producers who supply food to the consumer. In markets, there are two types of vendors: the formal and the informal. Formal vendors are regulated workers who work within specific areas, which may include a physical structure. However, much of the employment connected to markets is considered “informal” employment where the workers are unregulated and unprotected by the state. Over 60% global labour is within informal work, with 85.8% of work in Africa, 68.2% in Asia and the Pacific, 68.6% in the Arab States, and 40% in the Americas, and 25.1% in Europe and Central Asia being informal.<sup>68</sup>

Street vending, in particular, is an important source of self-employment in many low and middle-income countries. One study in Africa found that street vending accounted for between 13% of non-agricultural informal employment in Dakar and 24% in Lomé, representing a significant portion of women’s informal employment in these cities.<sup>69</sup> In most cities, a greater proportion of women are in informal employment and street trade than men, with less than 10% of women in the labour force being employed through a formal job.<sup>18</sup> Women are more likely to be operating survivalist, micro-scale businesses on the street-side and men more likely to operate permanent fruit and vegetable stands.<sup>21</sup>

Both formal and informal markets in urban settings are, therefore, an important source of employment in cities. One of the reasons for such high levels of employment in markets, especially informal markets, is the relatively low barriers to entry.

One study found that only about 20% of vendors had completed secondary school and many had less schooling, which means vending is a job that people can do with limited levels of education.<sup>21</sup> However, the jobs created in and around the markets are not limited to just the vendors. For example, one case study of a market in Dar es Salaam found there were casual labourers packing sacks and unloading trucks, cargo porters who load the trucks, security, management staff, account staff, gate operators and scale operators all working within and around the market.<sup>17</sup>

As already noted, local markets are better able to support smaller-scale farmers when compared to larger supermarket chains. For example, a Johannesburg farmers' market requires that market agents must procure at least 10% of their produce from poor, small-scale farmers.<sup>70</sup> Research from Asia found that local farmers' markets have a pro-poor multiplier effect across networks of low-income market intermediaries.<sup>71</sup> Additionally, a study in rural Bangladesh found that establishing market sites where women could sell their goods was linked to small-scale women farmers having increased spending on healthcare, children's education, and transportation—indicating greater resource availability for their households.<sup>72</sup>

**PRO-POOR MULTIPLIER EFFECT:**

'Multiplier effect' means that money spent or earned in one part of the economy circulates and creates additional economic activity elsewhere.<sup>73</sup>

"Pro-poor" means this economic ripple effect particularly benefits the poor—helping them increase income, create jobs, improve livelihoods, and reduce poverty. It refers to the way certain economic activities or investments generate benefits that disproportionately help lower-income communities.

Markets, even in higher-income countries, employ more people than the formal grocery sector.<sup>19</sup> A study from Spain found that 56 jobs would be generated by the activity in a local farmers' market but that number would increase to 155 jobs linked to indirect spending.<sup>74</sup> In the United States, Oklahoma found farmers' markets generated 795 direct jobs and sustained an additional 1,145 jobs in related activities. In Iowa, they estimated the farmers' market generated 471 full-time equivalent jobs generated as direct and indirect impacts. Finally, in West Virginia, they took into account the net impact farmers' markets would have on grocery store sales loss and found the markets still had a positive impact on the state's employment with an additional 43 full-time equivalent jobs.<sup>75</sup>

The number of jobs a sector can create is important, but so is the income generated from that employment. One study that examined the benefits of markets to traders in Fiji and the United States found that in Fiji the weekend gross revenue reported by vendors in 2013 was annualized to an amount nearly identical to Fiji's average annual per capita income. In New York, the market was only open one day a week and therefore could not be an individual's sole source of income. However, the income generated represented about 7% of the median household income in the East New York neighbourhood where the market was located.<sup>76</sup> The same review that examined the number of jobs created by farmers' markets in the U.S. also looked at economic impacts. They found that the Iowa farmers' markets generated over \$21 million in direct sales, an additional \$10.5 million in indirect benefits and an estimated \$12.2 million in personal income.<sup>75</sup>

Markets also contribute to local jobs by supporting entrepreneurship. A study conducted on farmers' markets in the U.S. found almost 80% of vendors reported the farmers' markets provided the greatest opportunity for the development of their business as compared to other possible ways to sell their goods. Markets can act as business incubators, supporting vendors in accessing not only clients and business contacts but also improving their skills in areas such as customer relations, merchandising, and pricing.<sup>75</sup> Markets foster entrepreneurship and distribute economic opportunities among many people, especially the urban poor, rather than consolidating economic opportunities among only a few people.<sup>76</sup>



The training and support offered to vendors via the market can extend to the informal vendors operating in and around the market. An example from Johannesburg highlights the role markets can play in supporting informal vendors. The Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market (JFPM) provided training to informal vendors on how to use the market, financed a business skills training program for informal traders, and supported both formal and informal vendors with a program to obtain financing for their businesses. The JFPM also housed a business incubation program for black-female-owned entrepreneurs to supply produce to hospitals and prisons.<sup>70</sup> Examples from South Africa and Namibia demonstrate that markets can support informal traders through training in basic market activities and providing much-needed skills training in areas such as bookkeeping.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the benefits to the local economy and jobs, markets also provide opportunities for decent work. Issues such as control over one's work and flexibility are key elements to job satisfaction. In the study examining the benefits of markets in Fiji and the U.S., traders from both countries reported the ability to earn an income, autonomy, respect and social connectedness were all benefits of being a vendor. Being able to decide their working hours, making their own decisions, and having no one dictate their activities were all mentioned by vendors as being important to them. Participants in the study also mentioned that vending earned them respect, which contributed to their satisfaction with their work. The vendors felt this respect resulted from their ability to earn an income. The authors of the study noted the economic and social benefits identified by the vendors were similar to research conducted with markets in both the Global North and the Global South.<sup>76</sup>



Markets can provide good working conditions for vendors. A study of markets in Arusha, Tanzania and Kampala, Uganda found that 83% and 84% of vendors respectively were either happy or very happy with their work.<sup>77, 78</sup> The cooperative nature of markets also contributes to overall job satisfaction and decent working conditions for the vendors. Markets, especially in low and middle-income countries, are typically organized so that traders of the same foods sit together and they tend to sell for the same prices with no easily discernable way to distinguish the goods. In this way, they do not undermine each other's businesses.

In a case study of a market in Dar es Salaam, the traders themselves help one another by travelling to the wholesale markets together, watching over each other's stalls, and occasionally looking out for each other's children. When one vendor is sick or unable to tend their stall on a given day, the other vendors will look after that person's stall, selling goods on their behalf and giving them the money when they return.<sup>17</sup> Many vendors also show newcomers how the business works and support their assistants in getting into the business themselves.<sup>17</sup>

The ability to create and join a vendor cooperative is a key factor that can also help with decent working conditions for vendors. A cooperative is a group of market vendors who advocate on behalf of vendors, which helps to empower people who may be disadvantaged in some way. For example, farmers that are connected to local networks, associations and cooperatives can increase their resilience to economic and environmental challenges.<sup>79</sup> There are several examples of traders' associations advocating for improved market infrastructure. In Busia, Uganda, the produce dealers' association successfully negotiated with the municipality to improve the safety of the market by resurfacing the market square and by improving market security. There are examples in India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Myanmar of associations working with local governments to address the physical environment changes necessary to create decent working conditions for those working in the markets.<sup>70</sup> When the Iron Market was rebuilt after the earthquake in Haiti, vendors, despite making lower incomes than the informal vendors on the streets, stayed at the market because of the relatively good working conditions and the security they felt in the market.<sup>80</sup>



Unfortunately, the strong sense of belonging and safety often does not extend to the informal vendors working in the areas surrounding the markets and on the streets. Informal vendors face several problems typically resulting from their often-illegal status. Confrontations with police and local officials are a huge problem as is their inability to access capital, which prevents them from improving equipment or accessing technology.<sup>19</sup> However, work in South Africa demonstrates that improving and maintaining markets can be beneficial to both the formal and informal vendors. For example, the Johannesburg Fresh Produce Market has 71 stalls for informal traders and a place where they can store goods overnight. In Rundu, Namibia the town council built a market with running water and basic facilities and then quickly identified the need for additional markets for informal vendors.<sup>70</sup>

### **Market Cities Program:**

The Market Cities Program offers "How to Create Successful Markets" training online. Over the course of four weeks, market operators, developers, policymakers, and advocates learn the essentials for creating a thriving public market that is economically sustainable, maximizes community benefits, and contributes to the creation of inclusive public places. Participants also explore the principles of Market Cities centered on the value of systems thinking to strengthen the shared efforts of public markets, as well as how markets are continuing to adapt to challenges brought about by Covid-19. Visit [Project for Public Spaces](#) for more information.



**ACTION TRACK 5** Building Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stress 



# ACTION TRACK 5 Building Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stress

Action Track 5 is focused on building a resilient food system that can withstand shocks created by conflict, climate change, environmental change, as well as health and economic stresses. This Action Track is focused on building food systems that can anticipate, maintain, recover and improve as a way of ensuring that “good reaches everyone”.<sup>81</sup>

Globally, the number of reported weather-related natural disasters has more than tripled since the 1960s, and these disasters result in over 60,000 deaths annually, mainly in developing countries.<sup>82</sup> The food security challenge, which will see the world needing to produce about 60% more food by 2050, is intensified by agriculture’s extreme vulnerability to climate change, the impacts of which are already being felt.<sup>83</sup> Increasing temperatures, weather variability, invasive crops and pests, and more frequent extreme weather events are reducing crop yields<sup>84</sup> and decreasing the production of staple foods in many of the poorest regions.<sup>85</sup> For developing countries these types of disasters can cause a major setback to health and development for years.<sup>86</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has given insight into what the future might hold in terms of disaster preparedness and, unfortunately, that future does not look promising. The pandemic and related travel restrictions that disrupted global supply chains and consumption patterns caused shifts in demand, which in-turn resulted in price volatility and overall financial instability that particularly affected food systems.<sup>2</sup> These supply chain disruptions, along with increased consumer demand, created higher food prices around the world. This resulted in hunger spiking in 2020 with 2.3 billion people lacking year-round access to adequate food.<sup>87</sup> As a result of COVID-19, the EU acknowledged the need for reducing reliance on international markets.<sup>3</sup>



The Ukraine-Russia war, which began in 2022, has further intensified the global food security crisis, as both countries are major exporters of key commodities like wheat, corn, barley, rye, oats, and sunflower.<sup>5</sup> Following the outbreak of the war, the FAO's Food Price Index surged 21%.<sup>5</sup> The World Bank reported that corn and wheat prices were increased by 27% and 13% respectively in January 2023 when compared January 2021.<sup>5</sup>

Formal and informal markets are a vital part of the neighbourhood-based food distribution models and contribute to the resilience of cities. Before a shock, markets encourage local economies by supporting local farmers, creating jobs and providing for goods exchange. This contributes to the economic self-sufficiency of a city, which is a key factor of a resilient city as self-sufficient cities are less impacted by external disruptions when they do occur.<sup>88</sup> Food distributed at the neighbourhood level responds well to the needs and circumstances of residents, especially those living in poverty. When food is predominantly run by local actors, it becomes embedded in the community and therefore needs to respond to local requirements and purchasing capacities.<sup>21</sup> And when the food system is focused on connecting predominantly with small-scale actors such as the local farmers who produce the food to the small-scale vendors working in the markets, economic opportunities are spread throughout the community rather than being concentrated with corporate interests.<sup>17</sup>

During the pandemic, many governments disrupted the natural ability of neighbourhoods to distribute food, which reduced the economic opportunities that come from food distribution. Although markets, along with food retailers, were universally declared essential and permitted to stay open during mass closures and lockdowns, the same cannot be said of the informal vendors that are a key part of many cities' food distribution system. Their important contribution to food security was not considered and this resulted in people needing to travel further to get food and expose themselves to more people at the crowded shops that were allowed to remain open, which was the opposite of what was needed in the crisis.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the increases in food prices seen during the pandemic can be attributed, in some places, to the absence of informal vendors who would normally sell food at lower prices.<sup>19</sup> COVID-19 confirmed the important role that markets and vendors play in the food system, especially at the neighbourhood level.

An additional benefit of markets is that they provide spaces for residents to connect to their neighbours, which contributes to creating social capital. Social capital refers to the trust, social norms and networks that impact social and economic activity.<sup>86</sup>

The same social capital that helps to create a decent work environment, builds trust among vendors and creates economic viability, also helps to create resilience. Social capital allows farmers, for example, to access resources, trade knowledge, and benefit from financial assistance.<sup>89</sup> People in the food system give food on credit, share the cost of common transport for their goods, and show newcomers how the business works, which all helps build social capital. In a study from the U.K., many market vendors gave considerable support to one another, allowing vendors to rely on each other during times of stress or struggle.<sup>90</sup>

Markets provide the locations within neighbourhoods for all members of a community, regardless of age, gender, or income, to interact and build community trust. Markets provide places for a diverse group of people to mingle and become accustomed to each other's differences.<sup>90</sup> Markets can also act as the main focal point for a community. Research has found that markets provide four different social functions. They provide opportunities for social interaction, they allow the formation of social ties, they enable social mixing across groups and they provide social inclusion.<sup>90</sup>

A study investigating motivators for farmers to sell at farmers' markets in Bologna, Italy, found that being able to have a direct contact with consumer to develop trust and in turn a loyal customer base was a factor<sup>63</sup>. In a UK study, shoppers stressed the importance of their relationships with the vendors and markets emerged as a crucial space in the daily life of older adults. Markets are places for older adults to interact and places that allow community members to respond to their needs<sup>90</sup>. Experiences in Japan and India demonstrated that this type of social capital becomes a critical component of recovery after a disaster<sup>86</sup>. Examples from Haiti demonstrated the solidarity and social capital that comes from vending in a market helped vendors in the aftermath of the earthquakes and were, in some cases, seen as the key to survival<sup>91</sup>.

But, it is during a disaster where the markets' ability to distribute food to residents quickly and efficiently becomes vitally important. Short supply chains, a key feature of local markets, can repair and react more quickly in times of stress and breakage.<sup>92</sup> In addition, they are less susceptible to global shocks and disruptions. A literature review across the global south found that shorter value chains and smallholder farms were found to be more resilient against COVID-19, as they relied on local indigenous seeds as well as community labour exchange, while commercial farms were more severely hit in comparison.<sup>2</sup>

In North America during the pandemic, markets played an essential role in coordinating the flow of local produce from farmers to consumers. As mentioned in Action Track 3, crop diversification, more common in smaller, local farms, is an important strategy for building resilience as it allows farmers to spread risk and diversifying crop mix is seen as a major risk management strategy. It has been suggested that African agriculture will become more profitable through diversified crop operations as the global climate continues to experience more extreme temperatures and it is this diversification that will reduce the need for disaster insurance.<sup>61</sup> A diverse crop mix provides farmers with diversity in income sources and forms a type of insurance to overcome weather and market variations, which is key to dealing with climate-related challenges in the future.<sup>61</sup> And, as already highlighted, markets are critical for small farmers focused on a diverse crop mix to sell their goods.

### Markets During Pandemic

In the Netherlands, the Dutch cabinet allowed the continuation of markets during Covid-19 as they were considered ‘vital parts of the food chain’ where many residents do their groceries. In addition, they were seen as a way of relieving supermarkets from the hoarding crowds. In addition, markets were presented as providing healthier solutions to food distribution because the food was sold in the open air without carts being used by multiple people without being disinfected. See [this article](#) for more information.



# Conclusion

Local public markets are a critical piece of a sustainable food system and bring value to communities by providing healthy, affordable, and nutritious food while also creating a space to socialize, play, and learn about tradition and culture. They assist in meeting the UN 5 Action Tracks by linking small-scale, local farmers to urban dwellers, thereby supporting both access to nutritious and affordable food, while also supporting the nature-positive practices that ensure a resilient, environmentally sound food supply.

Even though markets provide all these benefits, they are still under threat around the world. Threats include cities' development and “modernization” efforts, lack of management capacity, and economic practices that neglect women and the most marginalized.<sup>93</sup> Markets in many cities do not live up to their full potential because there is a lack of effective policies and funding. Many national and local governments do not understand their market systems' value. Although some municipalities recognize the importance of ensuring that markets are located within communities, there is no municipal planning for the formal or informal food environment for many cities. Many cities allow economic development forces to decide where food and food outlets will be located. So, although the food environment is profoundly shaped by municipal planning, the spatial characteristics of the food environment end up being the by-product of a lack of decisions by policymakers.<sup>22</sup>

With such clear benefits, governments must protect and invest in their market system to ensure continued universal access to this essential service and promote local public food market resilience and sustainability. This will require significant investments in urban planning for markets. As communities, cities, and nations look for ways to create sustainable food systems, they need to consider the strategies that will impact the greatest number of Action Tracks and SDG goals and targets. Developing a market system is a critical strategy that can transform the food system and make progress toward developing a sustainable food system.



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