



The impact of COVID-19 on informal workers: Findings from Durban survey



- WIEGO is conducting research in 12 cities focusing on the impact of measures to prevent the spread of C19 on informal workers' lives and livelihoods.
- The Durban / AeT study interviewed 179 informal workers - street vendors, market traders & informal recyclers.
- Most interviewees – 103 – were women.



- July 2020: **72%** of workers reporting a drop in household income compared to pre-lockdown levels
 - **Market traders:** Have lost 65% of pre-lockdown income
 - **Street vendors:** Have lost 50% of pre-lockdown income
 - **Waste pickers:** Have lost 30% of pre-lockdown income
- “Access to the market itself has been limited by frivolous rules imposed by the municipality...”

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Market Vendor, Durban.

- **Waste Pickers:** Women's incomes have suffered to a greater extent than men
 - 47% drop in income (F) vs 22% drop in income (M)
- **Street Vendors:** Little gender difference in income drop
- **Market Vendors:** Male incomes have suffered to a greater extent than women's
 - 89% drop in income (M) vs 60% drop in income (F)

% WORKERS REPORTING CHANGE IN CARE AND HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES - BY GENDER

■ Increased
 ■ Stayed the same
 ■ Decreased
 ■ Not applicable

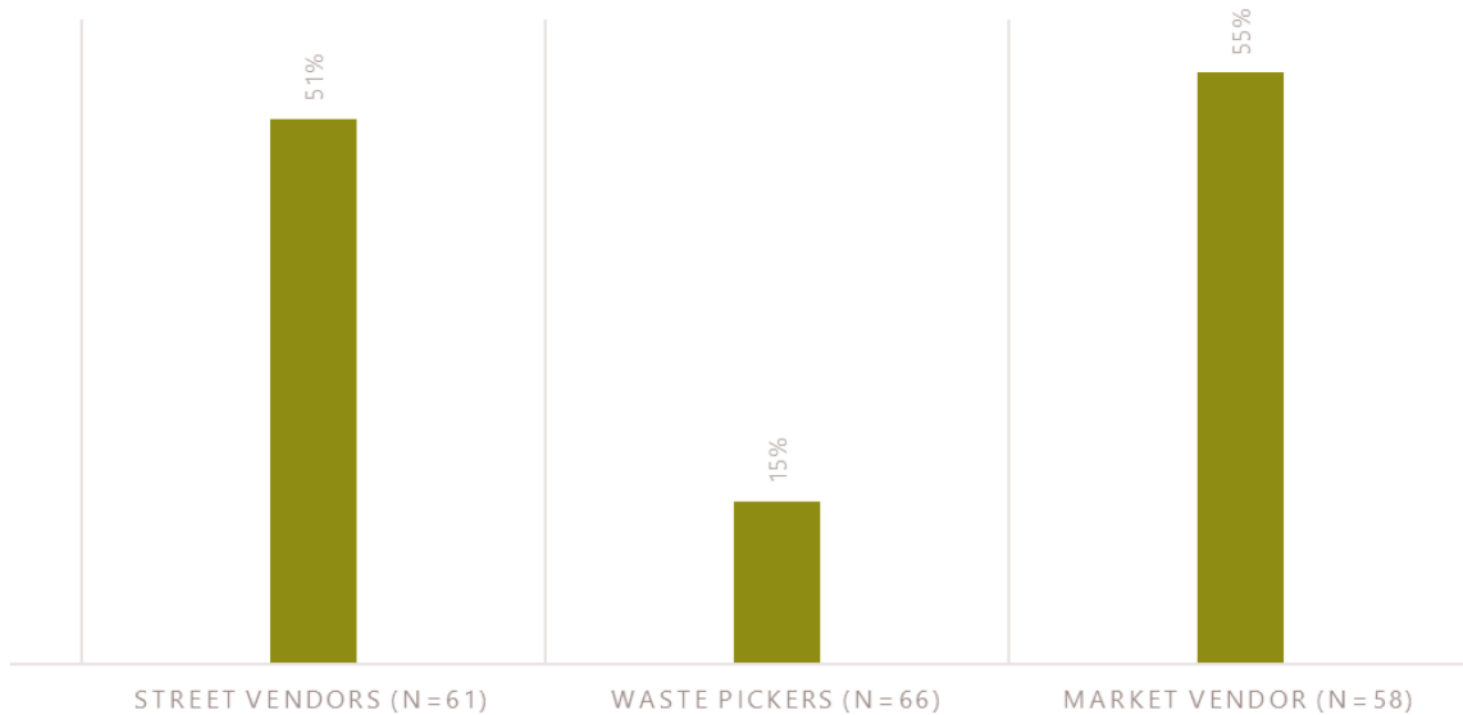


- Echoing the findings of national studies, women reported a much higher increase in household and childcare responsibilities than men.

“I have a grandchild and I leave her with siblings at home. Some traders bring their kids to the market. If they don't have anyone to look after them, it's difficult to bring a kid on a taxi everyday. We have to take extra precautions” (Woman Street Vendor, Durban)

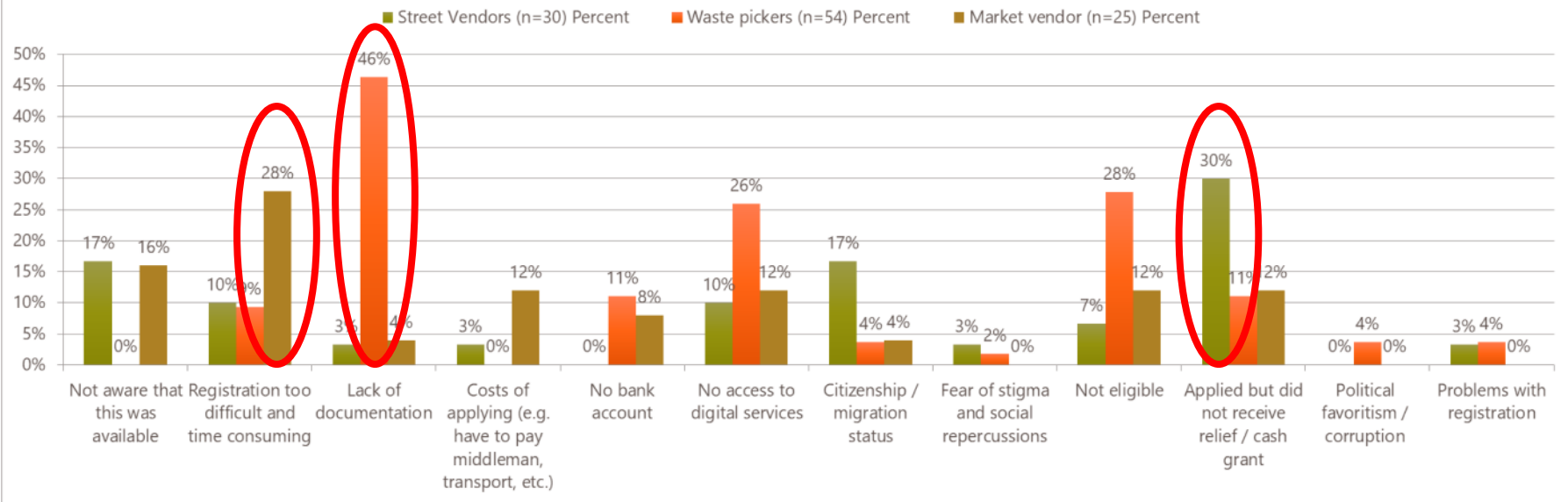
Gendered impact of household and care responsibilities

WORKERS WHO RECEIVED CASH GRANTS FROM GOVERNMENT



Government grants

Fig. 14: Reasons Workers Did Not Receive Cash Assistance



Government grants

“The biggest challenges for most street vendors are now economic related. The majority rely on grant money to restock goods and produce despite the fact that business is quite slow.”

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- Street Vendor

Cash grants

- The extension of the Special C-19 Grant, should be accompanied by an extension of the CSG top-up, which has reached women informal workers relatively effectively.
- Grants must be extended for a longer period – workers do not see themselves recovering for the next 2-3 years.
- DSDB small business grants have registration and other criteria that disqualify most informal workers. These need to be reconsidered.

Additional urgent interventions:

- Access to water: 80 % of interviewees reported difficulties accessing water – at home and at work. Water tanks are urgently needed.
- Access to sanitation: Many public toilets in Durban inner city are currently locked and must be opened.
- Do no harm: Traders and waste pickers report high levels of police harassment including confiscation of goods. This must stop.
- Suspend local government fees: while traders re-establish themselves.
- Urban planning: Allow more flexible trading layouts.



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Thank you!