

# **Towards sustainable livelihoods in the Tanzanian informal economy**

Facilitating inclusion, organization, and rights for street vendors

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This publication results from a collaborative project between the [UONGOZI Institute](#) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and [UNU-WIDER](#) in Helsinki, Finland, [Sustainable development solutions for Tanzania – strengthening research to achieve SDGs](#). The project aims to inform the development and implementation of policies for economic transformation and sustainable development in Tanzania and the East African region. With financial support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the project was launched in 2018 with key research questions, providing the partners a framework for collaboration and the research work to be undertaken. The project focuses on macroeconomic perspectives, domestic resource mobilization, extractives, industrialization, sustainable livelihoods, and gender as a cross-cutting issue. It provides local stakeholders a platform for research and policy discussions on Tanzania, and bridges these discussions to the regional and international development debate.

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UONGOZI Institute gratefully acknowledges the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland for the funding to support this paper.

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**Abstract:** In spite of having some intensive national strategies to address poverty, Tanzania lacks a coherent national strategy to ensure sustainable livelihoods for those working in its informal economy, of which street vending is an important sector. Based on qualitative, in-depth data collected through interviews and participant observation between 2014 and 2019, our research scrutinizes how recent policies are improving the sustainable livelihoods of street vendors. We suggest two related foci for research and policy intervention. Firstly, the considerable diversity among street vendors regarding employment relation, gender, age, capital, and assets must be taken into account to design inclusive and sustainable policies. Secondly, the current policies and issuing of identification cards offer new opportunities for vendors to organize and claim their rights, but they need to be unambiguously enshrined in law. This will improve smooth and fair revenue collection and, importantly, street vendor organization and representation in decision-making processes at various levels of government.

**Key words:** Tanzania; street vending; sustainable livelihoods; street vendor organization; informal economy

**JEL classification:** D78, J46, J83, O17

**Acknowledgements:** We wish to express our gratitude to the interview respondents for sharing their experiences and insights, and we would like to thank UNU-WIDER researchers Milla Nyssölä and Maureen Were, Professor Joseph Semboja of UONGOZI Institute, and the participants in the research review workshop in Dar es Salaam for their valuable and constructive feedback. This paper has greatly benefited from the comments by the late Dr Flora Kessy, who passed away before its publication. We shall remain forever indebted to her.

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# 1. Introduction

In spite of having some intensive national strategies to address poverty, Tanzania lacks a coherent national strategy to ensure sustainable livelihoods in the informal economy, where more than 75 per cent of non-agricultural employment in Tanzania is estimated to take place (ILO 2012: 9). An approximate 70 per cent of young women and 60 per cent of young men work informally in urban areas (UN Habitat 2007: 9). As elsewhere, street vendors in Tanzania are among the most vulnerable groups in the informal economy (Brown 2017; Roever and Skinner 2016). This vulnerability is seen in the manifold challenges they face. In one aspect of this, street vendors have to cope with restrictions in accessing (formal) markets, training, credit, and other economic resources. In another, they tend to be excluded from decision-making processes as well as from legal and social protection. The result is that their asset base is shaky and prone to seasonal shocks, which in turn makes their livelihoods highly unsustainable.

National and municipal administrations, on the other hand, are under pressure to reconcile vendors' needs with formal regulatory frameworks as well as with taxation and urban planning policies. Failure to come up with an institutional framework to improve their livelihoods means leaving street vendors behind in the process of development. The current government under President John Magufuli has legalized street vending and begun to issue vendor identification cards (IDs). This is a major policy turnaround, offering to remove the hardships and lack of freedom of street vendors and to unleash their economic potential.

Against this background, this research paper focuses on the conduciveness of government policies to achieving sustainable livelihoods for Tanzanian street vendors, and on efforts to enhance their inclusion, organization, and rights. The questions driving the research are: to what extent are previous and current policies contributing to improving street vendors' asset base? What opportunities exist for street vendors to organize to defend their rights and to promote their welfare at the district, regional, and national levels in an inclusive manner as a step towards sustainable livelihoods?

While the shortcomings of previous policies are well documented by the research literature on street vending in Tanzania (see below), we highlight two themes which have so far received insufficient attention. Firstly, street vendors are not a monolithic group: there is considerable diversity among street vendors in terms of employment relations, gender, age, capital, and assets. Secondly, the legal status of street vendors' work, organization, and the new IDs are crucial for sustaining the livelihoods of street vendors in Tanzania. Collected between 2014 and 2019, our research data, based on in-depth interviews and participant observation, reflect the impacts of changing policies on street vending from the point of view of vendors and their associations.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section surveys the existing literature covering street vending as an economic occupation; policies governing street vendors in Tanzania; the existing policy gaps; and the importance of unionization for street vendors. In the third section we explain our research methodology, including the use of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF). Section 4 presents the empirical findings. We address firstly the diversity found within street vending and its relevance for vendors' access to space, capital, and assets, and secondly the changes brought about by recent policies and the introduction of the IDs, looking specifically at how this has affected vendors' organization and access to assets. Section 5 presents identifiable gaps in the new policy. This is followed by a summary and discussion of the findings in Section 6. Section 7 provides our conclusion and policy suggestions.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. The nature and role of street vending as an economic occupation

As an entry-level occupation in the informal economy,<sup>1</sup> street vending is one of the major sectors to attract those seeking to make an income. Roeber and Skinner (2016) found that in Sub-Saharan Africa, the share of street vendors in total non-agricultural informal employment was between 13 and 24 per cent in selected cities. Though the actual share and numbers are unknown for Tanzania, street vending is estimated to employ between half a million according to official statistics (URT 2014: xi) and over one million according to recent studies (Lyons and Msoka 2010; Mramba 2015a). Accompanying rapid urbanization, Dar es Salaam, the largest city and economic hub of the country, has seen a continuously increasing influx of street vendors in recent decades.

The research literature emphasizes the heterogeneity of the informal economy, as it provides opportunities for income generation for people with quite different backgrounds and in diverse socioeconomic circumstances. The International Labour Organization (ILO), for instance, differentiates between self-employment, paid employment, and unpaid family work in the Tanzanian informal economy (ILO 2002: 17). Following in the same vein, the Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP), in its final report, distinguishes between people in the informal economy who live 'in extreme poverty [and] are typically asset-poor' and 'those living in moderate poverty [who] have some assets and income' (UNDP 2008: 19). Informal employment further needs to be differentiated in terms of 'the type/degree of *economic risk* involved in the job and ... the type/degree of *authority* over the establishment or over the workers' (Chen 2017; emphasis in original).

These careful distinctions between different categories of street traders<sup>2</sup> and the adversities facing them, however, have been largely overlooked in research on Tanzania: the research literature commonly understands street trade as 'micro-enterprise' or 'business', and considers street vendors, including hawkers, to be own-account 'micro-entrepreneurs' (e.g. Brown et al. 2010; Lyons and Msoka 2007; Lyons et al. 2014; Mramba 2015a; Tripp 1989).

For many Tanzanians, street vending presents a legitimate, and often the only available, way of making a living. Its omnipresence also renders it an indispensable part of life in urban Tanzania. Studies have attested to the importance of small-scale trade during the periods of economic crisis in the 1980s and economic liberalization in the 1990s (Bagachwa 1982; Havnevik 1986; Kerner 1988; Tripp 1989, 1997). As a subsistence strategy, street vending continues to be central to poverty alleviation today, particularly among the youth. Research further documents the vital importance of street vending not only for traders and their families but also to wider communities, as well as to the functioning of urban infrastructure and the national economy (see Brown 2015; Brown et al. 2015; Liviga and Mekacha 1998; Lyons and Msoka 2007, 2010; Lyons et al. 2012, 2014; Mbilinyi and Omari 1996; Mramba 2015a, 2015b; Tripp 1989, 1997).

Due to the informal and, until recently, non-legal status of street vending, comprehensive and detailed demographic and socioeconomic statistics for Tanzanian street vendors are not available. Yet, in general, street vending is an occupation of the poor and vulnerable. Regarding the Tanzanian informal economy in general, Bonnet et al. (2019) found that there was a close relationship between poverty and working informally. Based on measurement by the absolute moderate poverty line of US\$3.10 per capita per day, 95 per cent of all workers from poor households are informally employed while 75 per cent of informal workers are from poor households. In a 2007 survey, 27 per cent of street vendors reported average daily profits of above TZS 11,000, 44 per cent of less than TZS 6,000, and 17 per cent of less than TZS 3,000 (approximately US\$5, \$2.70, and \$1.35, respectively). Women were over-represented in the poorest group (Lyons and Msoka 2007). Similarly, data on street vendors' education is sparse; Mushi (2004) showed that 80.8 per cent of street vendors had primary education, 8.2 per cent secondary, 0.8 per cent a diploma, and 0.3 per cent a college degree, while 9.8 per cent had no schooling.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, we use the term informal economy to describe diverse economic activities, jobs, enterprises, and work relations that are not regulated or protected by the state. In Tanzania, these are commonly described with the term informal sector (Swahili: *sekta isiyo rasmi*).

<sup>2</sup> 'Street trader' is used interchangeably with 'street vendor'.

## 2.2. Urban policies governing street vending in Tanzania

Roever and Skinner (2016: 359) remark that ‘street trade is one of the most visible occupations, yet few cities successfully balance the need to support livelihoods with the need to manage public space’. Balanced policies and regulation are central to reducing harassment and corruption affecting street vendors but also to helping municipal authorities to improve their revenue collection (Bhowmik 2005). Services like public parks and community space are normally well included in urban master plans, but space allocation for street vendors is still overlooked. Mahadevia and Vyas (2017) argue that sustainable solutions to the problem of business space facing street vendors lie in planning. In Dar es Salaam, as elsewhere, municipal master plans continue to be affected by Western thinking and overlook the necessity of allocating space for street markets (Lindell et al. 2016). Municipal governments have repeatedly attempted to relocate street traders to newly established, officially designated market spaces. The relocations, however, are usually strongly resisted, as the markets tend to be remote from the traffic hubs and provide inadequate infrastructure, and allocation of trading space follows no transparent or consistent lines (Lyons and Msoka 2010; Nyirenda and Msoka 2019).

For a long time, street vendors in Tanzania were regarded as covered under the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Policy of 2002, but their status has never been fully recognized; instead they have almost always been treated as unwanted intruders (Lyons and Msoka 2010; Msoka and Ackson 2017), ‘rebels’ (Brown 2017), or ‘refugees’ (Brown et al. 2015) with regard to the existing legal environment. It has been noted that the tension between street traders and municipal authorities stems from two main realities. Firstly, notwithstanding the long-standing presence of street vendors in Tanzanian cities, municipal by-laws often fall short of taking into account the need to create space conducive for street trading. Officially designated market space, which remains under the auspices of local government authorities, usually accommodates only a small percentage of all vendors in a given city (Nyirenda and Msoka 2019). Secondly, street vendors have been operating in violation of business registration and licensing laws. Although the Constitution guarantees the right to work to every Tanzanian, street trading is covered by neither commercial nor labour laws (Ackson 2015). Despite simplification of licensing procedures in recent years, becoming properly registered in accordance with existing business, financial, and tax laws on the national and municipal levels remains a tiresome and costly process, making compliance almost impossible (Lyons et al. 2014; Msoka and Ackson 2017).

Since the early 2000s, the consecutive governments under presidents Benjamin Mkapa and Jakaya Kikwete devised various strategies to cope with the growing numbers of informally operating street vendors and to integrate them into the formal economy. The research literature has documented the shortcomings of formalization policies, which were implemented inconsistently and to a large extent were ill suited to street vendors (Lyons and Msoka 2010; Lyons et al. 2012, 2014). The policies were further overshadowed by the continuing criminalization of street vendors. Harsh penalty charges, imprisonment, eviction, and destruction of property brought about enormous hardships for the traders and their families. For instance, as many as one million traders might have lost their livelihoods in the nationwide clearances of 2006 (Lyons and Msoka 2010).

In late 2016, the government of President Magufuli entered a period of tolerance, following the destruction of a street market in the city of Mwanza and protests by traders. The national government further explicitly encouraged the practice of street vending to combat unemployment and fight poverty, and ordered administrative bodies at the regional and municipal levels to provide suitable trading spaces for the vendors. Currently, since December 2018, the government is also issuing vendor IDs and has begun collecting revenues from licensed traders.

## 2.3. Unionization and street vendor associations

Just as with other micro-businesses and groups of workers, street vendors’ ability to improve their working environment rests on the ability to organize themselves. Muiruri (2010) argues that street vendors’ associations are there to enable the vendors to advocate for and defend their rights, pave the way to basic services, uplift vendors’ bargaining power, and influence public policy. Most vendors’ associations in Sub-Saharan Africa, however, do not deal with licensing, vending sites, and policy advocacy but focus on welfare issues (Chen 2001). It is only in South Africa that one can witness vendor associations providing some services like bulk purchase, advocacy, training, storage, and marketing. Otherwise, vendors’ associations in Africa usually do not have the organizational structure and means to effectively engage in advocacy; they also tend to focus on single issues.

Research documents the difficulties for Tanzanian trade unions in organizing workers in other segments of the informal economy (e.g. Fischer 2013; Jason 2008; Rizzo 2013), while trade union organizing is still nascent in the sector of street vending (Carr 2016). Unionizing is key for the institutionalization of gains, as traders in unions and associations can more effectively lobby for the improvement of their situation through legal means, as in the prominent example of India (e.g. Joshi 2018). In India, legislation governing street trade is significant and clear in its focus: to reduce poverty, to regulate street vending, and to empower street vendors to influence its provisions (Brown 2017). Tanzania lacks this type of legislation.

Middleton (2003) argues that trader associations fail to make any significant gains particularly due to the changing nature of their context. The associations are also said to be particularly weak in advocating for access to public space (Brown 2006). What brings greater worry is that sometimes good policies may cease to be enforced or may even be reversed (Skinner 2008). Street vendors in Dar es Salaam have tried to organize themselves for a long time but have not been able to effectively influence policy-making. The political context they find themselves in is one of 'fluctuating political rhetoric' (Msoka and Ackson 2017: 183) involving periods of tolerance and intolerance.

## 3. Research design

### 3.1. Research methodology

This is a joint paper presenting combined insights from two independent research projects (Nyirenda 2020; Steiler 2020), based on data collected in Dar es Salaam in 2014–16 and 2018–19. The first research project and data collection aimed to gather the meaning of vendors' informal status for their livelihoods and labour organization, while the second focused on the changes to vendors' livelihoods in response to the introduction of vendor IDs. The findings of each project are presented consecutively under Sections 4 and 5, and their shared implications discussed under Sections 6 and 7.

Our research uses qualitative research methods—specifically, semi-structured key informant, focus group, and expert interviews, a review of policy documents and government strategy papers, and participant observation. The informal setting of street vending, and additionally its illegal status during the first research period, required methods which correspond with the volatile research environment and the uncertainty of vendors' daily lives, and which are sensitive to concerns and issues that tend to be eclipsed by formal and pre-fabricated procedures (Cerwonka 2007; Daigle 2016).

Interviews with individual vendors and focus groups reflected the participatory informal economy appraisal model (PIEA; see Chen 2017), a method designed for learning about informal workers' perceptions and experiences in their own words. The interviews covered livelihood strategies, structural and institutional contexts, government policies, and the challenges vendors face. The interviews were structured around thematic areas (for example, vendors' personal backgrounds, access to space, routines and organization of work, vendor IDs) and vendors responded to open questions, for example:

- What challenges do you face at your work?
- What are your views on the regulation of street vending?
- How clear to you are the national guidelines on how to handle street vendors at municipal level?
- What are some examples of the challenges you encountered in the issuing of vendor IDs at municipal level?
- What are your hopes for the future?

The list is not exhaustive; interviews and focus group discussions varied in content, as vendors were invited to raise their own issues. Interviews with government officials and experts focused on the background, rationale, and goals of policies but also on impediments to their implementation. The responses were either tape recorded or noted and then transcribed and thematically analysed.

### 3.2. Data collection

The first set of data consists of 29 semi-structured interviews with representatives of government institutions, international and local government and civil society organizations, market vendors' associations, and trade unions. In addition, semi-structured interviews, including two focus group interviews, were conducted with 33 street vendors from the Kinondoni and Ilala municipalities of Dar es Salaam. The respondents were volunteers from various districts, who had built rapport with the author during her participant observation. Though the research focused on individual experiences rather than quantifiable data, owing to a commitment to serendipity and openness in the research process (Steiler 2020), the respondents reflected the diversity among Tanzanian vendors in terms of gender, age, personal backgrounds, and livelihood strategies. The 9 female and 24 male vendors were between 16 and 55 years of age and included vendors working at designated and non-designated market areas and roadside kiosks, as well as hawkers working without fixed location.

The second set uses qualitative data collected between 2018 and early 2019 through formal interviews with leaders of the newly formed street vendor association for Kariakoo ward in Dar es Salaam, as well as a telephone interview with the chairman of the National Umbrella Association for Street Vendors (SHIUMA, Shirika la Umoja wa Machinga). An interview was also conducted with the Office of the District Commissioner of Ilala municipality. Two sessions of focus group discussions were conducted with leaders of the street vendors for Kariakoo ward. The executive committee of 15 members was divided into two groups—one

composed of eight members and one of seven members. As the whole committee had only two women, the researchers purposively placed one woman in each group. More data were collected through semi-structured interviews involving 36 respondents from Ilala and Ubungu municipalities. The three busiest streets were identified and selected from each municipality and then each sixth street vendor was picked until a total of twelve vendors was reached in each street. Of these, 11 were female while 25 were male. Vendors' activities were also observed in Ubungo, Shekilango, Sinza, and Kariakoo, where their conversations were recorded and analysed. In-depth interviews were further conducted with two law experts from the University of Dar es Salaam to establish the legal status of both the association and vendor IDs in relation to vendor rights in the light of existing labour laws. Two in-depth interviews were conducted with government officials from Ilala municipality. Table 1 gives an overview of the interviews.

**Table 1: Overview of research respondents**

	Formal interviews with government officials, experts, and leaders	Semi-structured interviews with street vendors			Focus group interviews
		Male	Female	Total (M+F)	
Round 1 2014–16	29	24	9	33	4 + 4
Round 2 2018–19	7	25	11	36	8 + 7
Total	36	49	20	69	23

**Source:** authors' construction based on own data.

### 3.3. Conceptual framework

The paper draws on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF; see DFID 1999) to analyse the role of regulatory settings and government policies as structures and processes that are important in transforming street traders' livelihoods and making it sustainable through decreasing vulnerabilities and thus stabilizing their asset base. We follow the DFID definition that understands livelihoods in terms of capabilities, assets (material and social), and activities of people in their normal life setting. Livelihoods become sustainable when they can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance people's capabilities and assets both now and in the future. Policies are thus assessed in terms of their potential to reduce vulnerability to shocks and stress through strengthening street traders' asset base. We conceptualize legal insecurity as a context of vulnerability for street traders while access to vending space, finance, and skills are some examples of assets that will eventually lead to association, representation, and inclusion in decision-making processes and institutions at various levels of government. We see the legal status of street vending and codification of their economic and social rights, including rights at work, right to work, and right to the city, as central to achieving sustainable livelihoods.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Policies facing a heterogeneous sector

#### Life cycles in street vending

Street vendors interviewed for this study can be categorized into three groups. The first is stationary market traders who own or rent a stall or table at a designated market space. These traders pay rent and fees and are relatively safe from eviction; they are, however, unregistered and unlicensed and may lose their workspace due to illness, unpaid back rent, or a change of market management. The second group is stationary street traders who work in a non-designated area but usually return to a fixed location, for instance at the roadside or a street corner. To this group belong the Mama and Baba Lishe (street kitchens) and makeshift kiosks, as well as traders with larger stocks of merchandise. The third group is mobile hawkers, called *machinga* in local slang, who carry a small selection of easily portable items around with them and display them on demand.

The differentiation also reflects hierarchical stages of street vendors' life cycle. The work experience and livelihood strategies of many interviewed vendors displayed a similar path: vendors taking up street trading because of its level-entry requirements usually start with peddling inexpensive wares, often in casual employment or in co-operation with others. With increasing experience and capital, vendors move on to own-account hawking of first low-priced and later high-priced items. The next step is to make an investment in purchasing equipment, e.g. cookware or a pushcart. Once vendors have found a niche for their wares and accumulated sufficient capital, they settle into a more permanent vending space, renting or owning a table, kiosk, or storage space. Ultimately, a vendor may possess a stall at an authorized market or even their own shop with a formal business registration.

Proceeding along this life cycle, however, takes vendors many years and is riddled with manifold risks. The vendors, particularly hawkers, testified to their vulnerability to shocks and stress. Harsh competition makes it difficult to find a profitable niche. For some vendors, accumulation of capital and business expansion is out of the question, as their incomes barely cover the daily costs of living. For others, penalty fares and eviction, conflicts with competing traders, theft and confiscation of their property, illness, or accidents may take away in one day what has been accomplished over a long time.

These struggles were exemplified by the life story of one hawker who had been selling wall maps and posters in Dar es Salaam for more than 12 years. On six days of the week, he commuted from the suburbs to the city centre to buy the posters from a retailer, then spent the afternoon touting them to car drivers and bus passengers at a busy road. The number of posters he could purchase depended on the sales of the previous day, from which he had to subtract the cost of his meals, bus fares, and accommodation rent. After initially doing well, competition had continuously gone up while demand for the posters and his profit margin went down. The harsh working conditions were taking a toll on his health, and he additionally had to support his ailing parents. He did not have the means to switch to another line of business.

But there are also street vendors who succeed in moving from mere survival to accumulation. Accumulation may occur vertically or horizontally. Vertical accumulation implies investing in the expansion of their street vending business, e.g. the purchase of a pushcart, a table, or a stall, or even the hiring of a worker. Horizontal accumulation allows a vendor to invest in another source of income, e.g. a second business or a *shamba* (small farm), often run by kin. Six of the interviewed traders, among them two hawkers, gave an account of how they had been able to reinvest the profits of their sales over time and thereby gradually increase their income. Lyons and Msoka (2007) similarly document the potential for growth in the sector of street trade.

#### Structural factors and individual assets

The success of street vendors depends on a variety of often overlapping factors: firstly, structural factors like gender, age, and social norms play an important role in shaping street vending. Research has shown how women, while over-represented in the informal economy, tend to have lower positions and lower incomes (ILO 2012; Chen 2017). Our research mirrored the results of earlier studies (Lyons and Msoka 2007; Tripp 1997), according to which incomes were higher among men and older street traders. Street vending in

Tanzanian cities follows an informal yet firm gendered division of labour, which is further determined by social norms concerning appropriate behaviour for men and women of different ages and marital status (see Steiler 2020). For instance, hawking, which implies walking and shouting in busy streets, is the occupation of choice for young, penniless, fortune-seeking men but was considered degrading by older, male vendors, while female vendors considered it unsafe and inappropriate for women. Female vendors, especially when unmarried, further reported facing daily harassment and being disadvantaged in the tough competition for customers and trading space.

Secondly, individual assets such as education and skills matter for both acquiring starting capital and developing a fruitful sales strategy. In our study, vendors who had attended secondary school or higher fared significantly better than their less-educated peers. One trader who rented a slot at an open-air market to sell second-hand clothes explained the links between education, employability, and street trade:

I've done [street vending] while I studied at the college. It was very hard, the conditions are bad, I had to fight a lot. Now my plan is to get employed. When I get employed, I get the capital, then I can continue the business. My target is to construct that business, to reach the highest point, then I'll have my own shop, my own company ... There is not enough employment ... To find yourself a job in this country is too hard ... But I studied a lot of things ... You have to do anything, whatever is needed, you cannot choose. Later, I'll start my own firm. (interview, Ilala, Dar es Salaam, March 2015)

### **Diversity in capital ownership and employment relations**

While all street vendors interviewed by one of the authors qualified as entrepreneurs in that they carried the economic risk of their income generation, only a minority owned a business over which they had full authority. Of the 33 traders in this sample, six hawkers sold merchandise for retail shops or other street vendors. In at least three instances, the merchandise was owned by formally registered retail shops. Unlike entrepreneurs, these hawkers worked for a low wage or on commission, not for profit. Many vendors lacked the capital and assets to run their business independently: of the 27 traders selling their own products, 11 were pooling their production materials or sharing facilities such as equipment or storage rooms with fellow vendors. Three reported depending on additional income from occasional informal jobs to acquire the necessary capital for their street vending business or to compensate for slack sales, and another three depended on the help of unpaid family members. One-third of all interviewed vendors explained that their incomes were overall too low and too unstable to allow for accumulation for expansion.

In addition, the vendors discussed their lack of education and of skills, as well as poor infrastructure, as severely limiting the success of their business. A slight majority, among them particularly those owning the least assets and capital, stated the lack of employment opportunities rather than business ambitions as their motivation to take up street vending, which they considered arduous and insecure work yielding low pay. The choice of casual employment, self-employment, and entrepreneurship was thus involuntary rather than voluntary and related to macroeconomic conditions, education, and skills (see Bennett and Rablen 2015). These findings are in line with other studies on the informal economy demonstrating the neglect of casual wage labour (Rizzo et al. 2015) and of structural constraints, as well as the need to differentiate between various employment relations and between self-employment for subsistence or for accumulation (Chen 2017; De Neve 2005; Harriss-White 2010).

However, this diversity and the varying challenges faced by different subgroups tend to be overlooked in key national policies on street vending. The focus on self-employment, entrepreneurship, and business skills is central to government policies that are favourable to street vending. Entrepreneurship is central to the Business and Property Formalisation Programme (Swahili acronym: MKURABITA),<sup>3</sup> which aims to 'economically empower property and business owners in the informal sector' (MKURABITA 2016) and the Tanzanian National

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<sup>3</sup> MKURABITA is based on the policy suggestions of Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto's Institute for Liberty and Democracy. The reform plans developed by de Soto and MKURABITA assume that poor Tanzanians possess valuable property and assets, which are, however, informal and thus not put to fully productive use. The reform process aims to simplify the procedures for registering and formalizing informal capital, assets, and businesses. This is envisioned to create an environment conducive to small business and thereby reduce poverty and stimulate national economic growth.

Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA),<sup>4</sup> as well as to the Doing Business agenda of the World Bank (2017) and its emphasis on improving access to micro-credit and creating a conducive business environment for entrepreneurs (see also Lyons and Msoka 2010).

The perception of street vendors primarily as own-account, self-employed entrepreneurs are also underlined in the National Entrepreneurship Strategy devised by the National Economic Empowerment Council (NEEC 2017). The NEEC calls attention to the needs of marginalized groups such as youth, women, and people with disabilities but designs its training programmes specifically for Tanzanians who have ‘the character and attitude of an entrepreneur’ and are ‘able to write a bankable business plan and pitch’ (NEEC 2018). Street vendors further qualify as owners of their micro-business in the new policy approach of vendor IDs.

### **Unequal access to limited trading space**

Differences with regard to vendors’ (starting) capital and available assets also interlink with their access to trading space. Officially designated trading space is usually more fitting for well-established traders. This can be exemplified by the Machinga Complex, a five-storey market building constructed in Dar es Salaam from 2008 to 2010. The Machinga Complex was designed to host approximately five thousand street vendors and provides 4,206 stalls, 8 storage rooms, 33 food vending spaces, and 68 kiosks. Similar market structures were planned for Mwanza, Arusha, and Mbeya. Most of the stalls, however, remained unoccupied and the Complex has remained unpopular among both vendors and customers. In addition to its remoteness, the monthly rent for stalls at the Complex is a dividing issue for street traders. Initially set at TZS 60,000 (approx. US\$30) for one stall, the rent was reduced due to low demand to TZS 10,000 (approx. US\$5) per month. For a segment who are already well established in their trade, the Complex presents an affordable trading space. These vendors possess skills, experience, and larger stocks, and, in some instances, hold another business elsewhere. This is not the status of many street vendors in Tanzania.

Among the vendors located in the Machinga Complex, female traders and traders with disabilities particularly value the safety of the facility, as it offers protection from the harassment and theft commonly experienced by vendors who operate on the streets. In the view of these traders, the Complex and similar facilities are attractive trading spaces. However, for poorer segments of street vendors, particularly for hawkers, even the reduced rent for one stall is unaffordable. Of 33 interviewed street vendors, 11 had too little in savings to commit to regular rent payments.

Similarly to other designated market areas (Lyons and Msoka 2010; Lyons et al. 2012), the envisioned shopping experience is also unfitting for the typical customers of machingas. Hawkers explained that their customers tend to have little cash to spend and prefer buying single, cheap items on the spot rather than purposely visiting a market or shop. A facility like the Machinga Complex is uninviting for customers who want to quickly leaf through a hawker’s usually small inventory to buy a single inexpensive item.

## **4.2. Vendor identification policy and its impact**

### **Description of the new policy position**

Interviews with government officials at Kariakoo reveal that efforts to arrange and tax street vendors in Kariakoo started in 2017. The vendors collaborated with their district commissioner and planned to design a labelled table for each of the vendors and allocate them in selected streets. The plan was to use the national IDs to identify the vendors and then collaborate with the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) to collect tax from them. As there was no law that allowed the TRA to tax unregistered informal traders, this proved difficult. Uncomfortable with the delay, President Magufuli decided to personally design, print, and launch the vendor ID. In December 2018, he gave out a total of 670,000 IDs. Each region was allotted 25,000 IDs and the regional commissioners were required to oversee the distribution (The Citizen 2018). This new policy position opens new opportunities for street vendors’ organization, welfare, and rights. The introduction of street vendor IDs attempts to co-ordinate not only vendors’ activities but also their contributions through taxes. In summary,

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<sup>4</sup> MKUKUTA I was implemented from 2005/06 to 2009/10; this was continued by MKUKUTA II, which was implemented from 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 (see URT 2005, 2010).

features of the emerging national street vendors' policy as pronounced<sup>5</sup> by President Magufuli, in several of his public speeches, include the following:

- Space use must be negotiated, not imposed;
- Relocation will only occur where adequate space alternatives are assured by the regional commissioners;
- All people have equal right to the city and, therefore, forced relocation is over;
- Regional commissioners have the sole responsibility to manage street vending in their regions;
- The machinga have the right to work anywhere but not randomly. (President Magufuli's official address, 6 Dec. 2016)<sup>6</sup>

The policy<sup>7</sup> requires all street vendors (and several other groups of small businesses) who hold capital equal to or less than four million Tanzanian shillings (approx. US\$2,000) to register and pay TZS 20,000 (approx. US\$10) for the ID per year. The tolerance of street vendors is in line with the Tanzania Vision 2025, which was introduced in 1995 as a major policy document to guide development into the twenty-first century. The vision mentions five desired attributes for Tanzanian society by the year 2020; the first is *high-quality livelihoods*, expected to be achieved through 'people-centred development, based on sustainable and shared growth and [to] be free from abject poverty [where] creation of wealth and its distribution in society must be equitable and free from inequalities and all forms of social and political relations which inhibit empowerment and effective democratic and popular participation of social groups (men and women, boys and girls, the young and old and the able-bodied and disabled persons) in society (URT 1995: section 1.2.1).

Street vendor identification and tolerance in the cities are steps that are welcomed by street vendors, who feel that former government regimes did not care for their wellbeing. That is why for a long time they were hostile and took the government to be an enemy.

We considered ourselves orphans and we did not want a journalist or anybody. The current president is the first to be supported by the machinga. Even when he leaves power, he will remain our president. (Focus group discussion, November 2019, Upanga, Dar es Salaam)

### **Association, innovation, self-administration, and access to finance**

Periods of tolerance by government authorities allow street vendor associations to emerge on the national, regional, and district levels and open opportunities to restore and strengthen vendors' right to the city. First, in Kariakoo, efforts to associate started back in 1998 but associations could not become formally recognized, as the general policy environment was hostile to street vending. A short historical account by one of the leaders of the Dar es Salaam Kariakoo Wamachinga Association (KAWASSO) recalls that in 2013 the Kariakoo wing started to be vigilant following cases of torture by the police, but their efforts could not go further than peer pity and encouragement.

Second, at national level, the umbrella association SHIUMA has developed a website containing information about their organization and its events and activities. In Kariakoo, KAWASSO has developed a web-based interactive portal containing data on street vendors from all regions of Tanzania. Members join at will. This has helped a lot in controlling theft and other forms of misbehaviour in Kariakoo. Through it one can get access to data concerning any street vendors in Tanzania just by scanning the vendor ID. The interactive and comprehensive app can be used on a mobile phone and gives many details on the vendors, including name, age, photo, place of birth, national ID number, taxpayer's identification number (TIN), house number, ten-house leader, table number, telephone number, zone, street, bank details, etc. It also links small traders to

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<sup>5</sup> One of the reasons why these pronouncements are not immediately turned into formal written policy is historical. The time of Ujamaa (1960s and 1970s) put emphasis on rural development, and street vending in urban areas was considered an unwanted occupation of loiterers. The economic liberalization of the 1980s added to the intolerant nature of the already revanchist urban policies.

<sup>6</sup> The information shared here is summarized from President Magufuli's address to officials from the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government on the stated date, at the state house in Dar es Salaam. Official written guidelines on street vending are still not available.

<sup>7</sup> Announced presidential decisions are not considered decrees or directives in contemporary Tanzania. According to municipal authorities, once the president gives an order it becomes, in effect, national policy.

financial sources like banks. KAWASSO also collaborated with the National Identification Authority (NIDA), TRA, and immigration offices to register the vendors in Ilala municipality, and more than 4,800 vendors were registered for their national IDs in July 2017. The street vendors of Kariakoo, in talking of their potential, refer to themselves as ‘gold that was lost in the mud’.

It was found during the study that Ilala municipality had developed a culture of collaboration, where the district commissioner sat down with the street vendors to plan. In Kariakoo they planned together for the vendors’ tables. Formerly, most of the vendors in Kariakoo had placed their merchandise on the floor because it was easier to collect it and run in case of a police raid. A few had tables (or stretchers, as they call them) that measured 4 × 6 ft. KAWASSO and the district commissioner restructured the tables to 4 × 4 ft in order to optimize space use. By the time of the study, the contracted supplier had supplied 1,148 tables. The beneficiary pays TZS 75,000 (approx. US\$38) in four instalments. The leaders of KAWASSO have also put representatives in each short street for administrative purposes.

SHIUMA<sup>8</sup> is an umbrella organization, and its constitution encourages vendors to form district and regional associations under it. It is well recognized at national level. The leaders have common social media interactive groups with ministers, political party leaders, district commissioners, and other political leaders where they discuss issues concerning their work and policy. Members of these associations contribute funds for the running of their offices. The major two aims at the national level are to unite all machingas in the country and to advocate for national policy which will lead to national law. By the time of the study, only one case of direct advocacy had been reported from Mwanza where, in 2018, a businessman was trying to defraud a machinga lady of her land. SHIUMA helped her to get a lawyer and she won the case.

The recognition of street vending has positive effects not only on the emergence of associations but also for the organization of street vendors in trade unions. While the sector is generally difficult to organize due to the high mobility of street vendors, earlier efforts of the Tanzania Union for Industrial and Commercial Workers (TUICO) to recruit traders had additionally been thwarted by ‘legal hostility’ (Ackson 2015) and evictions. According to TUICO representatives, the changing position of the government has allowed the trade union to develop new strategies to engage with street vendors. For the time being, TUICO was focused primarily on organizing market vendors, whose workplaces are more permanent than those of machingas.

One of several important outcomes of the introduction of the vendor IDs in Tanzania is an increase in trust. This has in turn attracted the possibility of vendors being considered by financial institutions as potential and trustworthy borrowers. The biggest bank in Tanzania (the CRBD) stepped in soon after the introduction of the IDs and set up a special scheme for street vendors. The scheme accommodates both group and individual small loans of up to TZS 500,000 with the ID as collateral. The scheme includes training in business management and insurance.

### **The changing definition of ‘street vendor’ in Tanzania**

According to Bromley (2000: 1), ‘street vending is simply the retail or wholesale trading of goods and services in streets and other related public axes such as alleyways, avenues and boulevards’. One theory holds that, historically, the word ‘machinga’ connoted a ‘marching guy’, a hawker, and not all small traders. However, in Tanzania the definition of a street vendor is currently very blurred. When President Magufuli introduced the vendor IDs he stated openly and clearly that they were meant for street vendors who suffered from constant harassment by the police. In his speech he remarked that the aim was to make sure they were no longer disturbed and were free to do their business anywhere provided that they followed the guidance of municipal authorities. However, the identity of the targeted vendors was immediately expanded. Roadside kiosk owners

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<sup>8</sup> Although VIBINDO (Jumuia ya Vikundi vya Wenye Viwanda na Biashara Ndogondogo, Community of Groups of Small Producers and Small Business) is mentioned many times in the literature as the representatives of all small business groups in Tanzania, SHIUMA insists that VIBINDO has never represented them. As SHIUMA understands, VIBINDO was trying to organize market vendors and not street vendors. According to SHIUMA, market vendors respond to market regulations and are easy to monitor and administer. This is also the case for those small traders who work within bus stops. Therefore, the main task of SHIUMA is to co-ordinate the vendors who operate along streets. Yet to demarcate clearly between vendors inside and outside markets is not easy. There is a lot of overlap—especially now that the IDs are issued to all traders with capital below four million Tanzanian shillings. The street vendors identify with their association in terms of what they call ‘collective pain’—that their leaders are also proper machingas. This is where VIBINDO ceases to fit in.

started immediately to identify themselves as machingas. As there were no national guidelines clarifying the targeted beneficiaries and because the performance indicator was the number of IDs sold, officials at municipal level began to sell IDs even to people not falling under the category of small informal traders. In one of the regions, a regional commissioner produced an awkwardly long list of 47 categories, including bartenders, small miners, taxi drivers, commuter bus conductors and drivers, freelance journalists, small industrial workers, and even the beneficiaries of the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), which is meant to support poor families.

Slowly, the term 'machinga' has evolved to include various kinds of small businesses, especially those conducted along the streets. Yet in normal use, a watch maker and shoe shiner would hardly be included in the list of machingas. The introduction of the vendor ID in Tanzania has basically re-defined 'machinga' to include all businesses running on capital below four million shillings. As we have shown, this is hard to determine. Today, even SHIUMA does not restrict the definition of street vendor to the original sense of a seller who walks around. The sense of permanence encroaches, as implied in this statement from one of the leaders:

We cover all the small traders, but we wish that we were all permanent—not hawking. The hawkers are hard to trace. They are also hard to develop. If you want to help them, it becomes hard. It is also very important for security purposes. We need to know where each one of us is and what their number is. (Interview, Upanga, Dar es Salaam, November 2019)

## 5. Some identifiable gaps in policy

### 5.1. The need for legal backing

The chairperson of the Tanzania Law Society (TLS) is quoted as stating: ‘We need a law which will describe a small trader. This will help to create uniformity of practice all over the country’ (*Mwananchi*<sup>9</sup> 2018). A national law covering street vendors, however, is missing in the new policy advancements. Currently, the rights of vendors are not openly and clearly stipulated in any formal government policy document. Neither is there any law to back up their associations and their activities. The leaders of KAWASSO hope for the complete legalization of their activities and organization. As their chairperson remarked:

It is good that the president is speaking for us. Now we are requesting him to put things in writing at least for reference. (Focus group discussion, Upanga, Dar es Salaam, October 2019)

During the field work, SHIUMA and KAWASSO were registered under different laws. At national level SHIUMA is registered under the ministry responsible for community development, but at lower levels district and regional associations are registered, like other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The leaders of SHIUMA intend to transfer its registration to the Ministry of Home Affairs—to give it the status of an NGO that can engage in advocacy. Though street vendors have started to conduct meetings and have established offices and formal leadership for their newly formed associations at the national, regional, and district levels, legislation is still unclear on their legal status and guaranteed rights.

The argument of the vendors is: if the ID is issued by the president, whom do the machingas report to? Which ministry are they under? They do not have industries, so they do not belong to the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The Ministry for Regional Administration and Local Government has been given the mandate, but the vendors feel that the minister does not seem to deal directly with them.

### 5.2. Policy co-ordination at national and municipal levels

Ilala municipality has been outstanding in its performance for several reasons. One is that it hosts the core of street vending in the country—including the Kariakoo Market area and the Machinga Complex. The second is that KAWASSO is led by the national deputy chairman of SHIUMA. But thirdly, the municipal authorities seem to have been relatively more co-operative with the street vendors. This fact came out clearly in the focus group discussion we conducted with the leaders of SHIUMA representing Ilala municipality.

For some other municipalities the policy link is not as strong. One of the remarks from the respondents is that some municipal authorities have regarded the ID policy as the ‘president’s issue’.

We only trust the president. These others are not yet understanding us! They still have the old mentality that we do not matter. (Focus group discussion, Upanga, Dar es Salaam, November 2019)

The media has reported serious mismatches in policy implementation between various regions of the country. This has necessitated that the president intervene from time to time to clarify issues. In some regions of the country, the IDs were sold at a price higher than the designated TZS 20,000. Also, most of the IDs were sold in Dar es Salaam, although each region was allotted an equal number of 25,000 IDs. Each region was therefore required to be innovative, and this opened a loophole for perverse opportunism. There were big-businesspeople who bought the IDs, brought them to Dar es Salaam, and then distributed them to small traders who helped them sell their goods in order to avoid taxes. There is also no serious inspection of vendor IDs. The vendors ask: what is the difference between a vendor who has an ID and a vendor without ID? If the ID does not matter, are people going to buy the ID next year?

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<sup>9</sup> *Mwananchi* is a widely read daily newspaper in Tanzania.

Despite the tolerance of street trade in urban areas under the current administration and the introduction of easily obtainable vendor IDs in 2018, competition over scarce urban trade space remains. Some vendors fear that these are moves to segregate them and push those with very limited capital out of Dar es Salaam. As described, vendors differ substantially in their daily income, and prime business areas like Kariakoo are affordable only to a minority. Vendors who cannot compete successfully feel that the IDs are meant to push them out of the city.

### 5.3. Vendor IDs and revenue collection

If all the IDs are sold (which is what is expected) the government will collect TZS 13.4 billion. This is good news for the TRA, which was also praised for having surpassed its tax collection targets towards the end of 2019. However, as mentioned, larger businesses are using the IDs and street vendors to avoid tax. For some vendors, on the other hand, the ID is an opportunity for relief on the levies that they pay. Formerly, they paid about TZS 500 per day to the municipal authorities. This means more than TZS 160,000 per year—against the new amount of TZS 20,000 per year.

Moreover, under President Magufuli, most public funds are centralized. Municipals have limited autonomy in income generation and expenditure. This study found that municipal authorities considered the vendor IDs another instrument used by central government to cut deeper into what used to be collected at municipal level. Some municipal authorities are trying to be innovative, and manipulative, in order to absorb the apparent loss. In one case, beneficiaries of TASAF, which is meant to support poor families, were required to pay for the ID in order to continue receiving the benefit. Normally, municipal authorities collect market levies. After the introduction of the IDs, some traders with IDs can be found both inside and outside of markets. In Arusha, tensions have arisen between TRA officials and the municipal authorities on how to collect levies from vendors holding the ID and trading inside and outside the main market.

## 6. Summary and discussion of the findings

Street vending provides a crucial and, in light of lacking alternative employment opportunities, in many cases the only way of making a living for hundreds of thousands of Tanzanians. It is commendable that criminalization and evictions of street vendors have halted under President Magufuli's government. The legislative and policy environment, however, still needs to be improved for street vendors to continually enjoy sustainable livelihoods which can withstand stresses and shocks.

The confusion surrounding the ambiguous and often fluid employment relations of street vendors, however, presents an on-going challenge for TUICO: On the one hand, informally employed vendors are often not aware of their status and rights as workers, and the employers, usually owners of larger businesses, tend to hide the employment relationship. On the other hand, the trade union has yet to develop strategies and expertise to defend the business rights and interests of actually self-employed vendors.

One pitfall of previous and current policies is that they have paid insufficient attention to the socioeconomic diversity in street vending. The depiction of street vendors as own-account, self-employed business owners fits only a minority of interviewed vendors. In some cases, this categorization is indeed a mere euphemism, as it optimistically presents street vending as a pathway to individual accumulation and economic growth and obscures the obstacles many street vendors face in their struggle for survival. Structural factors like gender and age, as well as individual assets and capabilities such as education, skills, and access to capital, are central to the success of street vendors in proceeding from subsistence to secure and sustainable livelihoods.

As the name implies, street vending takes place in the streets. Relocating street trade and hawking away from the streets to costly and remote facilities is not only a contradiction in terms: it also offsets the benefits that the widespread and long-standing culture of street vending provides for both vendors and their customers, particularly those with low incomes. It is important that vending space is accessible, affordable, and safe for diverse groups of vendors who have different needs. Against this background, the new policy under President Magufuli of tolerating street vending in attractive locations in different parts of the cities, close to the daily flows of customers, is a welcome change and has raised the hopes of street traders across Tanzania. At the same time, public space is becoming congested, partly because the new policy environment is misused by businesses which do not qualify as street vendors with low capital. The harsh competition disadvantages street vendors with fewer assets and capabilities.

The power of the policy shift can be seen from its immediate outcomes. The new policy position has improved street vendors' livelihoods in three ways at least. It has unleashed self-management potential and set the stage for vendor association, unionization, and representation in decision-making bodies at multiple levels of government, which is a form of social capital. It has also removed the long-standing conflict between municipal authorities and street vendors, which is a good example of reduction in vulnerability. Finally, it has significantly increased access to financial assets, since the ID is also recognized as collateral for small loans. Although the ID is also a way of introducing the vendors to the 'tax radar', they generally consider the policy to be a better option than the alternative context of continued vulnerability.

The question of whether the IDs mean that street vendors are now allowed freely and permanently in the city is also posed. During the field work in 2018–19, it could be clearly seen that the streets were becoming more and more squeezed as the number of vendors increased. In addition to hawkers and owners of small kiosks, some traders downscale their businesses in order to take advantage of the policy opportunity. They close big shops and open wooden and metal stalls along the streets. Increasingly, stalls look more and more permanent. Yet what the government authority pronounces does not promise any permanence. Recently, when the minister for regional administration and local government was opening the national meeting of SHIUMA, the dominating discourse was that the government was setting aside TZS 149 billion for the construction of markets, modern bus stops, and small industries. This sounds alarms that despite the new policies, the government is expecting street vendors to move into industries and markets, not along the streets.

There is a gap between what the higher authorities are directing and what the executive bodies at the regional and municipal levels understand and do. One of the outcomes of this weak link is that practice is not uniform all over the country. How street vendors are treated in one municipality is not the same as the way they are

treated in another. There are misinterpretations and malpractices surrounding the distribution of vendor IDs. The distribution of IDs across regions irrespective of actual demand neglects the concentration of vendors in major cities and has led to misallocation of the IDs. Follow-up on the possession of the ID among traders is also missing. This may be the case for at least two reasons. One is that the follow-up exercise has budgetary implications, while the second is that the funds collected are going to belong not to the municipality but to the central government, and so municipal authorities do not see the need to commit to the exercise.

Another issue is how street vendors are defined and how the vendor IDs are distributed. We have seen that the definitions of machinga, street vendor, and small business are changing. The argument for a definition based on holding capital of less than four million shillings does not hold in all cases: some vendors hold capital of above that sum, but this is hard to verify. The questions of how the maximum required capital is determined and how merchandise agency is controlled so that big traders do not misuse the policy have not yet been clearly addressed. Some occupations categorized as machingas are not 'capital' owners. They sell labour. These include small-scale miners, salons, and informal brokers. The annual fee of TZS 20,000 may also be too small for some vendors, while for others it requires the whole capital they have.

In the past, law enforcement and policies towards vendors exposed vendors to shocks which too often resulted in the loss of capital and livelihoods. The issuing of IDs, as well as the use of public space by vendors, cannot be sustainable if it depends on the political will of the president. The specificities of street vending and vendors' rights remain insufficiently recognized in national business licensing and registration and in labour laws. However, we consider it a positive development that street vendor associations are increasingly included in the design and implementation of regulations and by-laws at the municipal level.

## 7. Conclusion and policy suggestions

Based on our findings, we suggest that policies and regulation concerning street vending need to be sensitive to the heterogeneity among street vendors and the specific needs of different groups. Policy design should strive to be inclusive of vendors at all stages along the street vending life cycle, and to account for various employment relations and differences in terms of capital, assets, education, and skills. In addition, specific groups, such as women, youth, or people with disabilities, may require varying forms of support and protection.

We propose the introduction of subcategories to the IDs which balance costs and benefits for vendors who purchase them. For instance, the common annual fee of TZS 20,000 per ID could be varied to account for the enormous differences in vendors' capital and income. Vendors at such places as Kariakoo could continue with daily levies of about TZS 1,000 or a higher annual fee, while the fee for the ID would be reduced for vendors in other areas. The fee could also be reduced for specific groups—for example, disabled vendors. Considering the enormous numbers of street vendors, the high demand for IDs, and the scarce trading space, in the medium to long run, competition among traders and the congestion of vending areas can only be reduced by the creation of decent employment.

Tanzania needs clear policy guidelines for regions and municipalities in order to bring about uniformity in practice. We suggest placing responsibility for issuing IDs at the ward executive officer's desk as a continuous process. This will take care of the problem of management of the funds, as well as that of ID renewal. As we have seen, IDs get lost. If the ward executives are made permanent custodians of the IDs, vendors will have flexibility and ease of access. They can pay for new IDs and renew their old ones at times convenient to them.

The innovations of the Kariakoo machingas should be taken as the model. The portal and database they have prepared could be adopted for use nationwide. The co-operation between municipal leaders and street vendors in Ilala is an example that can inform practice all over the country. Regional commissioners must find time to conduct regular meetings with street vendors—at least monthly. Vendors have also indicated that they now need a representative in parliament, just like other strategic groups.

The ID itself needs a lot of improvement. Street vendors, through their association, have tabled this issue with high-level government authorities. The IDs need to carry the owner's photo and name. Other features could include the owner's telephone number and, at a later stage, even biometric features. This will help to reduce the possibility of people using IDs that do not belong to them.

Finally, the status of street vending and of vendors, their obligations, and their economic and social rights need to be clearly defined in law to give permanence to the current favourable policies. Labour, business licensing, and registration, as well as tax laws, need to be amended to account for the specificities of street vending. In particular, the rights of vendors to work and to association need to be guaranteed in order for vendors' voice to be heard in decision-making processes. This will enable them to move from a state of policy begging to policy advocacy and bargaining.

It can rightly be concluded that, though some shortcomings remain, the new policy position has reduced the hardships and vulnerabilities of the majority of vendors, and has increased their access to credit, to market space, and—importantly—to decision-making institutions, thus contributing to sustainable livelihoods for vendors. Once the impeding restrictions were removed and vendors allowed to trade freely, they unleashed their once forcefully suppressed potential in organization, administration, and the use of information technology.

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