STREET FOOD VENDORS’ TOOLKIT
Development Programme
Learnings’ Report
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2013

PARTICIPATION
STREET FOOD VENDORS’ ACTION TOWARDS SELF-REGULATION

IMPACT
WORKSHOPS RESULTED IN BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES AND GRASS-ROOT SOLUTIONS

OPPORTUNITIES
6 WAYS YOU COULD INNOVATE THE STREET FOOD SECTOR

WORKSHOPS RESULTED IN
BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES
AND GRASS-ROOT SOLUTIONS

6 WAYS YOU COULD INNOVATE THE STREET FOOD SECTOR
The Street Food Vendors’ Toolkit is one of the first outcomes of an innovative development programme that through the slogan “Change Habit, Change City” aims at building the capacity of Indian urban street food vendors for them 1) to improve the level of hygienic practices, 2) to adopt self-regulating practices to ensure and increase their livelihood and 3) to align with the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors and showcase the benefit of the programme to state authorities who will implement the Policy.

Through the vendors’ active involvement in three interlinked participatory workshops, the vendors have taken part in designing an educational and practical set of tools that can support them to achieve the three above-mentioned goals. The programme approach was designed to complement the efforts of the municipality, state- and national-level institutions and organisations by developing experiences and solutions on ‘what works at street level’ through practical examples.

This publication presents the key learnings and outcome of the pilot project implemented in Kolkata from July 2011 to July 2013, by the social development organisations Joygopalpur Gram Vikash Kendra, Gana Unnayan Parishad and Sabuj Sangha, with support from the international organisation InnoAid and the Danish Association Civil Society of Development (CISU). Academic research support have been provided through close partnerships with the Technical University of Denmark, the European Center for Advanced Research in Economics and Statistics, Brus- sels, The School of Economics at Bocconi University, Italy, the University of Bologna, department of political and social sciences, Italy and Copenhagen University, Denmark.

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**DRIVING CHANGE IN THE STREET FOOD SECTOR**

The Street Food Vendors’ Toolkit programme – that has now ended a first pilot phase – is anchored in a unique approach: It is the first ever development programme to focus and actively involve selected vendors and local unions in urban India through the design and implementation of interlinked participatory training workshops.

For the pilot phase in 2012 and 2013, 620 street food vendors in Kolkata and Bidhar Nagar Municipality have been involved, achieving its objectives beyond expectations. This pilot phase will be only the initiator of a wider range of work at street, ward, municipality and state level in the coming years that aims at ensuring a long term and scalable impact to further support the process of recognition and formalisation of the sector, and all the partners involved in its political process.

**Key achievements of the pilot phase**

1. More than 1,900 educational workshops was organised in the streets of Kolkata during 2012
2. 620 vendors prioritised and allocated time from their business to discuss their challenges, and obtain knowledge on policy, guidelines and hygienic practices
3. Several vendors acted as role models for peer training on easy-to-adopt practices and tools

**The large majority of the vendors participating in the programme have adopted sound hygiene practices daily undertaken**

- 92% has a dust bin available and make sure it is emptied daily
- 90% clean their workplace and kiosk daily
- 95% keep the food covered and 73% use tools to handle food
- 95% of the vendors provide a clean container for drinking

**Vendors – mostly in areas less afflicted by eviction threats – have started to invest in own solutions for their hygiene and business during and after participating in the programme**

- 150 invested in booklets and tools (Educational Poster and Aprons) as a trial for the programme and several more have sent their requests
- Several invested in bigger size dust bins, facilities to wash hands and solutions to clean drinking water
- More than 70% located in areas less afflicted by eviction threat now offer to serve food and drinks on disposable plates and cups (compared to around 30% in insecure areas)

**The programme has also built a strong platform for future Public-Private Partnerships**

- Tools and products developed for behavioural change have the potential to be strong marketing channels
- Different stakeholders at private and government level have shown interest and are open to establishing local public-private partnerships to benefit the sector and civil society
- Government authorities have shown interest in the programme outcome and have opened to future scaling up of the programme in new areas of the city

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*Data gathered from 2013 impact study, on random sites of the programme, on sample group, through observations and interviews.
STREET FOOD IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF SOCIETY

The street food vending sector plays an important socio-economic role in Greater Kolkata by providing nutritional food and a source of income and livelihood for a large number of the urban poor. Indian metropolises like Kolkata are subject to an ever-increasing urbanisation which calls for urban planning and development initiatives within all sectors, and among those also the regulation of the growing number of street vendors. Estimation states that there are 300,000 street vendors in greater Kolkata in West Bengal State, India, and approximately 50% of them are street food vendors. These 150,000 street food vendors provide daily tasty, affordable and easily accessible fast food to nearly 7 million customers from every economic stratum.

The awarded Kolkata Study from 1995 by All Indian Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, with support from FAO, highlights that street food is the least expensive means of obtaining a nutritional balanced meal outside the home. The multi-racial and -cultural characteristics of India is also depicted in the variety of street food that accounts for more than 300 different type of street foods, representing the pride of various states of India as well as some international cuisine. The street food vendors are therefore an important player in sustaining and supporting the growing urban poor population. In addition, the street food sector provides a source of livelihood for a vast number of “unskilled workers”.

Despite its societal significance, the employment context of street vendors is characterised by uncertainty and hostility. Vendors are commonly targeted by local authorities in the urban areas as illegal traders. The urban middle class constantly complains for how these vendors make urban life more chaotic, as they block public pavements, create traffic problems and contribute to public health insecurity. They are subject to harassment - including evictions, confiscation of merchandise, and demands for extortions - and the overwhelming majority of them lack access to social protection. Just like formal business operators, street vendors are less productive in unstable institutional environments where rules are irregular and unpredictable. This, in turn, negatively affects their ability to invest in the business and grow.

However since 2004 the Government of India has passed a National Policy for Urban Street Vendors (revised in 2009), recognising the importance of the street vendors in relation to poverty alleviation schemes and stresses the need to protect the right of these micro-entrepreneurs to earn an honest living.

To achieve this, major challenges are still to be dealt with: Food safety hazards are still prevalent due to limited food hygiene awareness, lack of waste management, unclean environments and working practices, and deliberate food adulteration. As the National Policy has yet to be implemented at state level, the political uncertainty and the street food vendor’s lack of knowledge of the National Policy has resulted in an impasse, where vendors have difficulties in aligning with the policy and regulate themselves according to the guidelines stated, and the state government miss the proof and certainty of the potential effectiveness of the policy's implementation.

Challenges are both a concern to the consumers and national, state and municipal authorities as well as among the street food vendors themselves.

Since 2008 InnoAid undertook continuous studies on the street food vending sector to ensure that the programme stayed relevant by addressing current challenges on food safety and formalisation of the sector. Information was obtained through literature studies, interviews with unions, government officials and other key representatives of the sector and field visits. Only limited information is broadly available on the street food vendor’s profile. Light is shed through a large baseline survey undertaken in the selected areas for the pilot project.

The implementing organisations surveyed 759 street food vendors with technical support from InnoAid and researchers at School of Economics at Bocconi University, Italy. The resulting surveys have been analysed with the supervision of researchers from European Center for Advanced Research in Economics and Statistics, Brussels.
INTRODUCING A UNIQUE, INNOVATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

The programme has been founded on 6 drivers of a unique approach and translated into practical tools, approach and activities.

- **INNOVATION**
- **LOCAL OWNERSHIP**
- **ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE**
- **CROSS-DISCIPLINARITY**
- **SUSTAINABILITY**
- **CO-CREATION**

The kiosk design, designed with the Technical University of Denmark is a good example of the innovative and participatory approach:

- **Project team map the vendors’ priorities after field visits**
- **Production manual detailed with blacksmiths**
- **Vendors share improvements of the current kiosk designs**
- **Engineers design concept and manufacturing manual**
- **Manufacturing prototypes for testing**

“We aim at developing and implementing innovative and sustainable solutions together with the vendors. We must focus on how relevant actors are actively involved in the development process, creating both insight and ownership. It is paramount to have a thorough understanding of vendors’ needs, perceptions, conditions, ideas, ownership and entrepreneurial skills, the context and the system the solution is to be functioning in. If a solution is to be a success both during and after implementation, it is important that the solution takes into account the local values and needs, and that the vendors maintains ownership of the system, solutions and skills after implementation”

-Marie Louise M. Larsen, President, InnoAid
ENGAGING VENDORS IN DEVELOPING THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS

Solutions reach full impact only when implemented and seen valuable by the vendors – this can only be achieved when vendors are involved in creating them.

The following framework is the tested model to engage and motivate vendors to develop their own solutions, for involved organisations to be receptive to the critical feedback from the vendors and flexible to meet their interests, challenges and availability. This was achieved through mobilisation, lean implementation of workshops and follow-up activities, facilitated by lean implementing teams of local organisations, structured with a field coordinator, a trainer and a supporting staff. InnoAid provides the capacity development through deep expertise in the participatory tools and activities that are the core of the programme.

SOLUTIONS ENGAGING VENDORS IN DEVELOPING THEIR OWN

WORKSHOP #1

FRAMEWORK: 90 minutes workshop with group of 10 vendors, nearby venue, during slow business hours
1:1 follow-up with vendors by trainer after 2 weeks

OBJECTIVE: 1. Create trust and a sense of participation
2. Know of key-messages of the National Policy
3. Understand benefits of Self Help Groups
4. Improve accounting practices

METHODS & TOOLS:
A. Register for attendance
B. Open group discussions
C. Message banners in Bengali with key messages of National Policy
D. Booklet on National Policy in Bangla
E. Practical exercises on financial record keeping

WORKSHOP #2

FRAMEWORK: 90 minutes workshop with group of 10 vendors, approx. 4-5 weeks after workshop #1, 1:1 follow-up with vendors by trainer after 2 weeks

OBJECTIVE: 1. Improve the workspace: sanitation, waste & hygiene
2. Understand positive link between hygienic workspace and business
3. Improve food safety through acquisition of tools

METHODS & TOOLS:
A. Open group discussions
B. Example pictures on “good and bad hygiene practices”
C. Customer quotes and perspective on street food value
D. Participation diplomas
E. On-the-spot observations and support

WORKSHOP #3

FRAMEWORK: 90 minutes workshop with group of 10 vendors, approx. 3 weeks after workshop #2, 1:1 follow-up with vendors by trainer after 2 weeks

OBJECTIVE: 1. Maintain use of tools and practices after workshops
2. Clarify topics and key messages addressed
3. Evaluate the workshops for continuous improvement

METHODS & TOOLS:
A. Open group discussions
B. Vendors teaching other vendors in the group
C. Meetings with banks for SHG formation
D. Educational posters developed with vendors
E. Keep Add Drop Exercise

Vendors involved show great interest in the workshops and see its long term benefit, both for their own business and for the development of the street food sector as a whole.

In the past very few vendors were aware of their National Policy. With the program, vendors know about their responsibilities as a street food vendor, as well as their rights – with great appreciation. They build great interest in developing their skills and capabilities on proper hygiene, safe water, food handling, waste management and how to maintain a clean workspace. When linked to business and livelihood, educational messages prove to be very impactful, and vendors report improved business success driven by these changes.

Vendors are ready to take further action to improve their conditions and to pay business tax and fees for civic facilities such as safe water, electricity, and waste disposal, if such were made available.

CASE: MEET MR. DALTARI BAN

Mr. Ban sells fast food and rice meals with the assistance of his wife. In 2012, Mr. Ban participated in all 3 workshops of the programme, adopting many of the practices and tools learned.

Mr. Daltari Ban now

✓ Has a dustbin for him and his customers
✓ Serves food on disposable paper plates and tea in paper cups for better health and food safety.
✓ Customers are willing to pay 2 INR extra for a meal served on disposable plates, proving a successful business proposition
✓ Cleans the utensils with water collected daily from public source and maintain his water containers clean.
✓ Serves purified and safe water for customers to drink by using local cheap water purification tablet – fellow colleagues even have a sign to promote this service to customers!

Through the workshops he gained valuable knowledge that he is now also passing on to his wife and fellow vendors along the street.

Before workshops the vendors mentioned their primary practices to maintain good hygiene:

• 62% of the asked vendors was trying to clean their cooking area on daily basis
• 16% was trying to maintain good hygiene by providing “fresh food and water”
• Covering food and waste management was highlighted by very few vendors as current practices towards good hygiene
• 3% only mentioned “hygiene” as a relevant topic for the vendors development

CASE: CREATING BANK LINKAGE

12 street food vendors from Sector V in Salt Lake City of Greater Kolkata successfully managed to create a Self Help Group (SHG) with common bank account during the pilot project.

With continues help and support from the programme, the “Annapurna Swami Nar Gashi” SHG was established by a group of 10 male and 2 female vendors. The vendors had three reasons to pursue bank linkage: (1) to deposit common savings and access cheaper financing, (2) to increase security and support by being united in times of eviction or other crisis, and (3) to improve access to insurance and medical facilities from the Government once the National Policy will be adopted at state level.
TOOLS DESIGNED FOR SELF REGULATION

The street food vendors have strong interest in investing in educational and technical solutions to improve their working conditions and workspace. The programme developed, designed and manufactured a number of tools, available in Bengali and English, in close collaboration with the vendors, to enable and strengthen the food safety along the streets, through the vendors’ self-regulation.

Download most of the tools for free online on www.innoaid.org/downloads

CUSTOMISED POSTER with 5 primary educational key-messages educates the vendors and the customers

The vendor customises the poster with the business’ name, and contributes with 35% of the costs.

HANDBOOK summarises key educational messages from the workshops for continued support and education. Included messages on how to improve sanitation, hygiene, waste and workspace are directly linked to key messages of the National Policy and the customer statements as a motivation for change. The Handbook is distributed for free and financed by the programme.

DUST BIN provides a visible and easy way to dispose daily waste properly

As only 70%* of the customers today are using the dust bins, the vendors have selected a new dust bin design for its movability, appropriate volume and colour, and ability to cover the waste during the business hours with the flexible lid. Educational stickers can motivate and attract the use of the dust bin. Solution can be co-financed by the vendor, private sector and township authorities in return for their local branding.

DISCOUNT COUPON delivers hygiene messages to customers while creating customer retention as part of the vendor’s marketing strategy “Buy 9 meals at the same vendor and get the 10th meal for free”. Coupons are given to customers and include educational messages on hygiene and waste practices target to the customer. It can be financed by companies who can use the backside for advertisement.

APRON is a visible tool for hygienic preparation and handling of food, designed by the vendors with their preferred colours, shape, accessories and promotion message to the customer. Vendors contribute with 40% of the costs. Companies and local township authorities have communicated interest in financing the programme share for their branding.

The street food kiosk is prototyped for semi-mobile vendors following guidelines from the National Policy and meeting vendors’ needs, by responding to their critiques of current design.

Specifications of the design to highlight:
- Easiness to keep a clean and hygienic workspace (smooth durable surfaces, easy to clean and keep clean).
- Safe and spacious storage
- Durability and the ability to easily remove and change part that wear out.
- Upgradeable and ability to customize to accommodate vendors different financial capability and needs (can be upgraded along the way in the choice of material and design)
- Size accordance to the National Policy.
- Flexibility in regards to roofing composition and internal storage space.

92% Vendors said they would like to improve their kiosk, of those 82% for beautification of their business.

The vendors’ responsibility to not occupy the whole footpath but leave space for pedestrians was the key messages most remembered after the workshops along with the requirement to ensure cleanliness of workspace.

A DONATION CHALLENGE OWNERSHIP

The kiosk will either be fully or partly financed by the vendors to ensure full sense of ownership: While some vendors have expressed the capacity to fully finance the kiosk i.e. through a common savings system, the programme has also received great interest from companies and development authorities to co-sponsor the kiosk as a marketing channel.

*Finding from the Impact study on the target group

TESTING PROTOTYPES

A limited number of prototypes are being tested on the streets of Greater Kolkata to finalise the specifications before setting up strategic partnerships for production and distribution.

OPEN SOURCE DESIGN MANUAL

The design and specifications are open source and the programme is happy to share a soft copy of it with anyone who could be interested in more information, or for those who could be interested in the large-scale production.

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6 WAYS YOU COULD INNOVATE THE SECTOR

The multitude of entrepreneurs and the socio-economic importance of the street food sector present numerous opportunities both for actors in the profit and non-profit sectors. Trade unions, government authorities, researchers, companies and others have already been involved in identifying such opportunities.

The street food sector, in fact, could offer:

1. **Commercial channel** for products that improve the value proposition to the end customer. E.g. through business-to-business partnerships to sell sanitary napkins as improved value for customers.

2. **Large market for customised products**
   E.g. strengthening efforts of non-profit organisation in rural areas by offering supply of hygienic, disposable and biodegradable plates, safe spices, or organic, high quality, reliable, customised and fair priced food products (e.g. fish and vegetables) from rural or semi-urban areas, etc.

3. **Uniform and organised sector** to model and develop the provision of basic infrastructural services in complex urban environment.
   Such as access to water, collective waste collection system, access to electricity etc.

4. **Untapped market for technological innovation** targeting urban environments.
   E.g. products such as urban bio latrines, solar driven electricity, low technology water purification, mobile hotline support, etc.

5. **Effective point of communication** to large customer base and share of urban population, through whom public awareness campaigns can be channeled.

6. **Large platform to access indigent members of urban society** and improve conditions.
   E.g. with provision of additional education to the many underage girls employed by the vendors as labor.

VALUABLE PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

We can develop a partnership with you, to create mutual value for your current or new initiative!
We welcome your ideas and collaboration opportunities.

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Your agenda and motivation might be one or many:

- **Profit**
- **Human rights**
- **Social development**
- **Urban development**
- **Health**
- **Legislation**
- **Beautification**
- **Marketing**
- **Tourism**
- **Communication**

- **Link and access** to large organised group of street food vendors (1000+)
- **Tools and expertise** on how to carry out behavioural change communication activities and training amongst the street food vendors (within food safety, hygiene, creation of self help group, marketing)
- **Experience** in the design and development of programs targeting street food vendors
- **Dedicated staff and trainers** with 3 years experience in development of the street food sector
- **Broad knowledge base** on street food sector and link to leading universities
- **Established relationships** with local and state authorities and other relevant stakeholders within the sector
- **Technical expertise and developed solutions** for the street food sector, such as training manuals and guides, kiosk designs, etc.
- **International staff** with leading expertise on participatory approaches, innovation, user-centred design, market creation, public-private partnerships

Please feel free to contact the programme through InnoAid directly on Email: streetfoodproject@innoaid.org
FROM IDEA TO ESTABLISHED SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMME

The strength of the programme lies with the bottom-up, grass root engagement of the vendors and the understanding of the social strata by locally based organisations. Its good preparation is paramount, since most of the vendors have never been involved in a development project before.

CO-DESIGNED PROGRAMME

Several small-scale field-based research projects from 2008 to 2011 identified, analysed and assessed local conditions, challenges and opportunities within the sector. Universities within engineering, environment, business and hygiene developed the programme components in collaboration with the vendors, trade unions and local authorities.

InnoAid envisioned a pilot programme implemented on a grass-root level with direct involvement of the vendors, to then later be able to recommend state and national-level models for vendors’ self regulation, to meet the relevant policies and guidelines.

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

InnoAid partnered up with three local implementing partner organisations for their social rights-based approach and complimentary experiences of working with the urban informal sector and participatory approach to capacity development.

Local authorities, trade unions, research institutions and other relevant stakeholders within the sector further contributed with their support, knowledge, networks and critical recommendations.

STRATEGIC TARGET AREAS

Sector 5 in Salt Lake City, Bidhar Nagar Municipality, Greater Kolkata was selected as the primary location, in addition to selected streets in Central and South Kolkata, because of

- Limited threats of eviction
- Vendors leaders had indicated a great interest in participating in the project
- A growing number of food vendors was identified in concentrated areas around the corporate offices
- Grass-root authorities showed support and interest
- Great need to improve hygiene, sanitation, waste management and knowledge on rights was identified
Street Food Vendors' Toolkit is developed based on the first ever Street Food Development Programme undertaken in Kolkata since 2011.

Thanks to the street food vendors who have been part of the programme and for their contributions to developing the programme for better impact on the streets.

Developed by the social development organisations Joygopalpur Gram Vikash Kendra, Gana Unnayan Parshad and Sabuj Sangha with support from the international organisations InnoAid.