The multiples challenges faced by women

The recurring problem of street vendors is financial. 81.5% of them and they complain of financial difficulties due to the lack of profitability of their work. Living on credit is common because the daily profits are sometimes not enough to refuel the next day.

The hours of work are long and physically intense. In the majority of cases, women and men get up between 4 and 5 am, work an average of 12 hours a day. Since street cooking is a profession nearly 90% of which is occupied by women, they spend more than two and a half hours of their time doing domestic chores.

More than half of them use wood and / or charcoal as a source of energy for cooking. The smoke from burning wood and coal is inhaled all day by women and the few men cooking. This smoke can be extremely toxic to health, causing respiratory tract infections.

In one out of 10 cases, the children are in the workplace and work with their parents. Child labor, without being the job of street vendors and street vendors, is a proven reality in food markets. They often handle the transport of products and the sale of water or other miscellaneous products. A case all the more disturbing is that of the children left to themselves who also represent a tenth of the cases.

Graph 1: roles distribution in food sales on Cocoprovi (Gouro) market of Adjamé
TAKING ACTION

Financial support, for example through bank loans, would serve to expand food stocks by means of conservation that would avoid grueling and dangerous daily movements. Many restorers would no longer be living on credit and could reap the benefits of investing in the health and education of their children.

Access to quality water and a source of energy such as gas (which would no longer expose them to respiratory diseases and anemia) is also a wish for major improvement. Easily accessible and potable water would avoid travel or extra costs to purchase water and improve food and space hygiene.

Women seller with young children would like to have child care facilities close to their workplace so that they do not have to look after them during working hours and no longer have to rely on family or friends.

Formalized street cooking spaces could include a childcare space so that they are no longer a burden for women during their work. Finally, a reinforced cooperative logic would make women more resilient along the value chain.

In order to make workplaces safe for men and women, security personnel present during working hours would protect workers.

It would be relevant to encourage WFP initiatives in urban areas such as school canteens. The ever-increasing urbanization brings new challenges in terms of food security and new needs within cities are being felt. Canteen meals could be prepared by women and men practicing street cooking. This would enable them to have access to a regular clientele and partnerships with nearby schools could positively influence the schooling and nutritional status of the children of the meal preparers.

SOURCE(S):
WFP, 2017. Gender and Markets Case Studies #8: Gender and street food in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

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Photo page 1: WFP/Johana Simao

TO GO FURTHER:
Gender and Market Initiative: Empowering West African Women through Market-based Food Assistance: https://resources.vam.wfp.org/node/106

FOR THE LATEST INFO ON IVORY COAST:
http://www1.wfp.org/countries/cote-divoire