November 2025

STREETNET INTERNATIONAL

Street Vendors' Barometer Project

Monitoring and Documenting the Conditions of Street Vendors and Market Traders

Buenos Aires, Argentina

StreetNet International is a global alliance of street and market vendors and hawkers. Founded in 2002 in South Africa, we bring together trade unions, cooperatives and associations of workers to advocate for the labour rights of street and market vendors and hawkers. Our mission is strengthening and empowering member organizations to protect and promote street and market vendors' rights and livelihood, especially of women, through advocacy actions, capacity building, education, democratic governance, representation and solidarity among all workers.
www.streetnet.org.za

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Executive Summary

Globally it is estimated that informal employment accounts for 58% of total employment, comprising nearly 2 billion workers. This leaves millions of workers without contracts, social protection, or job security. Across many cities, street vendors and market traders are an important part of the informal economy. They play a critical role in providing goods and services in urban spaces.

In 2015, International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted Recommendation 204 – a set of recommendations to governments to enable the transition of workers from the informal to the formal economy while safeguarding livelihoods, rights, and protections. In 2024, StreetNet International (SNI) launched the Barometer Project, ahead of the ILO's 2025 International Labour Conference. It aims to generate credible evidence on the realities of informal economy workers and strengthen the capacity of affiliates to engage in policy dialogue and collective bargaining. The project applied 6 benchmarks aligned with the ILO Decent Work Agenda:

1. **Participation in social dialogue**
2. **Protection from violence and harassment**
3. **Right to work without restrictions**
4. **Access to social protection**
5. **Opportunities for formalisation**
6. **Decent employment conditions**

In 2025, the Unión de Trabajadores de la Economía Popular (UTEP), in partnership with SNI and GLI, implemented the Barometer Project in Buenos Aires, Argentina as part of a global pilot to monitor and document the conditions of street vendors and market traders. The study included the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, gathered through questionnaire surveys, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and stakeholder interviews. The methodology relied on a participatory approach involving local vendor-researchers, supported by UTEP leadership and coordinators.

The study found that the informal street vending economy in Buenos Aires is diverse, representing workers across different workplaces, occupations, work set-ups and selling different goods and services. There is a lack of uniformity in access to spaces for trading, and vendors frequently face irregular fees in exchange for permission to trade. Few vendors are formally registered, and very few have been offered support to formalise their business. Daily earnings fluctuate widely but overall tend to be low. Vendors face harsh and precarious working conditions, marked by inadequate infrastructure, poor sanitation and high health risks.

Access to social protection and legal recognition is extremely limited, while police harassment, violence and discrimination are widespread. Although there are examples of progress in formalisation and worker organisation, government support and meaningful dialogue remain minimal, leaving most vendors vulnerable and forced to self-organise to defend their rights and livelihoods.

These findings informed proposals for improvements to working conditions and to inform formalisation processes, with recommendations including:

- **Addressing immediate workforce concerns**
- **Expanding access to social protection**
- **Recognising vendors and improving access to registration**
- **Expanding access to affordable credit and capital**
- **Training and skills development**
- **Strengthening worker organisation**
- **Inclusive planning and dialogue**

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Glossary

Ambulantes	Mobile vendors who do not have a fixed location but move around to sell goods or services.
ART	Asegurados de Riesgos del Trabajo: insurance system designed to provide coverage for work-related accidents and occupational illnesses.
BA / CABA / AMBA	Buenos Aires / Autonomous City of Buenos Aires / Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires
Barrios de pie	Neighbourhoods Standing Up: a social movement organisation addressing social exclusion, unemployment, and poverty.
CAME	Confederación Argentina de la Mediana Empresa: a national business confederation representing small and medium enterprises.
CCC	Corriente Clasista y Combativa: a social and political grassroots movement focused on the working class and the popular economy.
CGT	Confederación General del Trabajo: largest trade union federation in Argentina.
Comedores	Grassroots community kitchens that provide free / low cost meals to vulnerable populations, often run by social movements, religious groups, or neighbourhood organisations.
CTEP	Confederación de Trabajadores de la Economía Popular: national federation bringing together informal and popular economy workers across different sectors.
Defensoría del pueblo de la caba	Public Defender's Office of City of Buenos Aires: an independent institution in CABA that acts on behalf of residents when rights are violated or threated.
ENAC	Empresarios y Empresarias Nacionales para del Desarrollo Argentino: business association bringing together small and medium enterprises.
ENOCEP	Escuela Nacional de Organización Comunitaria y Economía Popular: training and education initiative to empower workers in the popular economy.

FECOBA	Federación de Comercio e Industria de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: a business federation in BA providing support for formal small and medium enterprises.
Feriantes	Vendors who sell goods/services in markets.
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
Frente Dario Santillan	Social and political movement that emerged from grassroots movements of excluded workers organising to demand social assistance and jobs.
Frente Patria Grande	Left-wing political coalition made up of social movements strongly aligned with popular economy workers.
GLI	Global Labour Institute
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INDEC	El Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de la República Argentina (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Argentina)
Manta	Large piece of fabric or cloth laid out on the ground with goods on display
Manteros	Vendors who display goods on blankets laid out on the ground.
Militante	Activists or grassroots organiser who works to build power amongst workers, promote the struggle of the people and achieve social justice.
Movimiento Evita	A social and political movement named after Eva Peron and associated with Peronism, focused on grassroots activism to empower marginalised groups.
MTE	Movimiento de Trabajadores Excluidos: a social movement bringing together people marginalised or excluded from the formal labour market.

OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
R204	ILO Recommendation 204 on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy
Referente	Leader, organizer or representative amongst popular economy workers.
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SNI	StreetNet International
ULPE	Universidad Latinoamericana de las Periferias
UTEP	Unión de Trabajadores de la Economía Popular
VAIO	Vendedores Ambulantes e Informales Organizados: an organisation of informal street vendors and mobile vendors

Tables

Introduction

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines the informal economy as *"all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements*"[1]. In practical terms there are four indicators which describe work in the informal economy - **lack of a written employment contract**, **poor or non-existent coverage by social security systems**, **no job security**, and a **denial of fundamental rights.** It is estimated that **informal employment accounts for 58% of total employment, comprising nearly 2 billion workers.** In low income countries it can be as high as 89% of total employment.[2]

Across many cities, **street vendors and market traders are an important part of the informal economy.** These workers play a critical role providing goods and services in urban spaces. Street vendors typically operate in open or public areas, like streets, parks and open spaces, while market traders sell goods or services from stalls or built markets on public or privately owned land [3]. **They make significant economic and social contributions, not only by supporting their own livelihoods but also generating employment for other workers in the economy.**

However, most work in **extremely precarious conditions and their contributions are rarely matched by protections**. Workers often experience low and unstable earnings, insecure workspaces, inadequate access to social protection, occupational health and safety (OSH) risks and experience violence and harassment. Many vendors are vulnerable groups and face unique challenges. In most countries, their work goes unrecognised and invisible in national statistics and policies.

About the Barometer Project

In 2015, the ILO agreed a set of recommendations to governments for the transition towards formalisation - ILO Recommendation 204 on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy:

> *"[Governments should] take urgent and appropriate measures to enable the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while ensuring the preservation and improvement of existing livelihoods...and respecting workers' fundamental rights, and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship during the transition." [4]*

In 2024, in partnership with the Global Labour Institute (GLI), StreetNet International (SNI) launched the Barometer Project as part of its advocacy and implementation strategy for SNI Resolution on 'Initiating implementation of the ILO Recommendation 204 through collective bargaining with informal economy workers' participation.' The project coincided with the ILO's 2025 International Labour Conference (ILC), during which a general discussion took place on 'Innovative approaches to tackling informality and promoting transitions towards formality to promote decent work.' The Barometer project aims to monitor and document the conditions of street vendors and market traders by:

- Developing a detailed understanding of the livelihoods, characteristics and key issues faced by street vendors and market traders.
- Informing SNI on key thematic areas for further exploration in the project, with particular reference to opportunities for the formalisation of informal employment (improved livelihoods and working conditions, protection from harassment and violence, freedom of association, the right to work without restrictions, access to social protection, and recognition, engagement in collective bargaining and consultation with authorities).
- Strengthening the capacity of SNI affiliates to conduct future research and monitoring and produce credible evidence for policy engagement at national and international levels.

The project was framed within the ILO Decent Work Agenda [5]. Six benchmarks were identified to be used for the project:

1. **Involvement in social dialogue**
2. **Protection from violence and harassment**
3. **Right to work without restrictions**
4. **Access to social protection**
5. **Opportunities to formalise informal employment**
6. **Decent employment conditions for street vendors**

Two cities were selected as pilots for the Barometer Project:

- Harare, Zimbabwe, with Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA)
- Buenos Aires, Argentina, with Unión de Trabajadores de la Economía Popular (UTEP)

This report presents the findings from the research carried out in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Methodology

INCEPTION MEETING

In November 2024 a Barometer project inception meeting was held in Harare, Zimbabwe. Facilitated by GLI, the meeting brought together representatives from SNI and the participating affiliates to introduce and discuss the project, ensure that its aims, objectives and approach met their expectations and to approve research tools and a detailed workplan. The meeting provided the opportunity for both affiliates to share their current priorities, and agree activities, outcomes and practical arrangements.

The study relied on the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, gathered through questionnaire surveys, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and stakeholder interviews.

PREPARATION

The fieldwork was preceded by preparation of draft research instruments, including a questionnaire survey, focus group discussion guidelines and in-depth interview template, framed around the six project benchmarks. These were subsequently revised and amended in the training workshop, through field observation and consultation with UTEP, and testing.

FIELD WORK TEAM

The fieldwork was undertaken by a team of eight local volunteer field researchers nominated by UTEP, who were vendors and activists with direct knowledge of the industry:

Edith Colman - Facundo Villareal - Flavia Cruz - Paulo “Tata” Sosa - Nelly Vera -Lourdes Valdivia - Marcelo “Ciego” Lopez - Fabian Reyes

The project was also guided by and fieldwork and data analysis also included:

David Levitan - Amanda Capece - Lila Morala - Nicolas Villafañe - Ivonne Aparicio - Juliana Monzón - Camilo Romano - Camila Zubcov

TRAINING OF SURVEY TEAM & TESTING OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey was preceded by a training workshop for the survey team held on 18th and 20th March 2025 which was facilitated by the fieldwork organisers and data analyst, and attended by the survey team and local leaders, fieldwork coordinator and fieldwork supervisor.

TABLE 1: TRAINING WORKSHOP PROGRAMME	
Tuesday 18th March	• Introduction to the project and methodology • Introduction to draft questionnaire, detailed review and amendment and role play • Field research exercise, including testing of questionnaire • Review of field exercise and subsequent amendment of questionnaire
Thursday 20th March	• Review of changes • Introduction to sampling frame (locations and target respondents) • Workplan, schedule and practical arrangements

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The final version of the survey questionnaire (see Appendix A) as tested and amended contained a mixture of open-ended and semi-structured questions, and was made up of several sections:

- ***Part 1 (Q1-10)*** captured information about workforce characteristics from all respondents.
- ***Part 2 (Q11-12)*** captured information about activities of vendors and stall owners.
- ***Part 3 (Q13-18)*** captured information about work experience, conditions and arrangements from all respondents.
- ***Part 4 (Q19-23)*** was for stall owners and vendors to capture information about trading space, registration, formalisation, and loans.
- ***Part 5 (Q.24-37)*** was for all respondents and captured information about earnings and expenses, problems at work, access to social protection, consultation, and proposals for improvements.

SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

A target sampling of 500 questionnaire surveys was agreed in advance of fieldwork. 18 markets were identified as survey locations. A survey sampling framework was developed with UTEP and the data analyst. To ensure survey sampling was representative of the industry, markets were ranked according to estimated number of vendors. This informed the proportional allocation of surveys across different market sites. Survey sampling also aimed to capture a comprehensive picture of the street vending and market trading economy, including a mixture of genders and ages.

TABLE 2: TARGET SURVEY SAMPLING FRAMEWORK.			
MARKET OR LOCATION	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VENDORS	% SURVEY	TOTAL SURVEYS (TARGET)
ONCE - Recova	200	3	17
ONCE - Local de la olla	50	1	4
Los Andes - Chacarita	2000	35	173
Parilleros	120	2	10
Matanza	75	1	6
Santa Marta - Lomas	1000	17	86
Tigre Panamerica	30	1	3
Del Viso	100	2	9
Florencio Varela	1000	17	86
San Martin Tren	30	1	3
San Martin Feria	80	1	7
San Telmo Adoquin	125	2	11
Parque Lezama	300	5	26
Quilmes	50	1	4
Morena	80	1	7
General Rodriguez	50	1	4
José C Paz	200	3	17
Olimpo	300	5	26
TOTAL	**5790**	**100**	**500**

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

415 questionnaire surveys were validated from workers surveyed between Thursday 20th March – Wednesday 2nd April from 19 locations. Markets included vendors and traders selling a wide range of goods and services, and in both fixed and formal markets (see Appendix C for Site Maps).

TABLE 3: MARKET DESCRIPTION & SAMPLING RESULTS					
SURVEY LOCATIONS					
MARKET	DESCRIPTION	# VENDORS	OPERATING HOURS	#	%
CABA					
Los Andes	Permanent fair with formalised section, but mostly informal, and vendors sell from blankets ('manta'). The fair grew in 2024 with the addition of groups expelled from other areas in CABA.	2000	Friday, Saturday, Sunday: 9am-6pm	**65**	**15.9%**
Once - Recova	Informal street market on avenues and streets in commercial area.	250	Monday-Friday: 7am-7pm; Saturdays: 9am-5pm	**43**	**10.1%**
Parque Lezama	Formal fixed fair, managed by the City of Buenos Aires government. It also has an informal section.	300	Saturday, Sunday: 9am-8pm	**20**	**4.9%**
Parrilleros	Fixed street market with an informal arrangement. Vendors use carts to prepare food, or blankets to sell textiles and accessories.	120	During holidays and demonstration.	**14**	**3.4%**
San Telmo	Formal fair that is recognised and jointly managed by a vendors' association and the city government. Vendors have stalls selling higher-priced handicrafts aimed at tourists.	125	Saturday, Sunday: 9am-8pm	**12**	**2.9%**
Once	See Once-Recova			**9**	**2%**
Once – Olla	See Once-Recova			**6**	**1.5%**

PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES					
Carolina – F. Varela	Established informal market offering wide variety of products including tools, live animals, plants, cleaning supplies, designer clothes, school supplies.	500	Monday-Friday: 8am-1pm	**54**	**13%**
Santa Marta - Lomas	Fixed informal market, coordinated by the Ministry of Tourism.	1000	Wednesdays - Fridays: 5pm-8pm; Saturdays - Sundays: 9am-5pm	**49**	**11.8%**
V Albertina - Lomas	Informal fixed fair on public streets.	1000	Monday-Friday: 9am-12pm & 4pm-8pm; Saturday- Sunday: 8am-8pm	**32**	**7.8%**
Moreno	Informal, fixed hours fair in a public space near the train station.	80	Monday-Saturday: 8am-8pm	**23**	**5.6%**
Sol y Verde – Jose C Paz	Informal fixed market, located on railway land adjacent to the train station.	200	Monday-Sunday: 9am-6pm	**17**	**3.9%**
Feria San Martin	Fixed fair with an informal agreement with the municipality.	80	Friday, Saturday, Sunday: 6pm-10pm	**13**	**3.2%**
Solano	Informal street fair in a commercial area.	150	Monday-Sunday: 8am-8pm	**13**	**3.2%**
Gral Rodríguez	Informal, fixed hours market near the train station.	50	Monday-Sunday: 8am-8pm	**12**	**2.9%**
Olimpo-Lomas	Informal street fair.	300	Monday-Friday: 8am-12pm; Saturdays – Sundays: 9am-6pm	**11**	**2.7%**
Del Viso	Informal fixed market in the area surrounding the train station.	100	Monday-Sunday: 8am-7pm	**11**	**2.7%**
Bolsas - Matanza	Meeting point for street vendors. Vendors sell cleaning products door-to-door in surrounding neighbourhoods.	75	Monday-Friday: 8am-10am	**6**	**1.5%**
Tigre	Informal market with fixed coffee and food stalls operating during working hours at a transportation hub near a manufacturing area.	30	Monday-Friday: 7am-11am	**2**	**0.5%**
Tren San Martin	Street vending on train line.	30	Monday-Sunday: 6am-8pm	**2**	**0.5%**
TOTAL				**415**	**100%**

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of data was supported by locally-based research partner Universidad Latinoamericana de las Periferias (ULPE) - who provided advice and assistance in the design of research tools and data management and analysis. Data analysis was undertaken through data cleaning, data-entry and coding of the completed and validated questionnaires. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS software, including summary tables to generate descriptive statistics, including percentages, frequency tables and cross-tabulations. Qualitative data was organised and categorised to identify emerging patterns and themes.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 5 groups of workers organised by area / characteristics to complement questionnaire survey findings. This included one women-only group and one group dedicated to migrant workers. The FGDs explored the issues faced by the workforce in more detail than was possible through the questionnaire survey, including major issues participants faced at work, issues facing the industry, awareness/knowledge of reforms and ideas and suggestions for improving working conditions and livelihoods. (*See Appendix B for FGD guidelines*). Each FGD was held in an appropriate venue located near the relevant area. A rapporteur attended each discussion to take detailed notes.

TABLE 4: FOCUS-GROUP DISCUSSIONS

	Total	Men	Women	Location	Date
CABA	7	3	4	Olla de Alsina, Alsina 2163	21.03.24
Women	5	5	0	UTEP Office	24.03.25
South Markets	9	6	3	Lomas de Zamora	25.03.25
Migrants	5	4	1	UTEP Office	01.04.25
West Markets	8	6	2	Moreno	01.04.25
TOTAL	34	24	10		

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

7 confidential one-to-one in-depth interviews were undertaken with vendors selling from different types of set-ups. The interviews aimed to build a more detailed illustrative picture of operating costs and income on a typical day, including micro-economies, employment relationships and livelihoods. The data was recorded using template spreadsheets. The templates were tested in pilot interviews, resulting in minor modifications.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interviews were also undertaken with key stakeholders in the industry to gather more insight about key issues and recommendations for improvements.

TABLE 5: STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Stakeholder	Location	Date
Local Vendor Leader	UTEP Office	20.03.25
Ivonne Aparicio, MTE	UTEP Office	20.03.25
Leo Bilansky, ENAC	Av. De Mayo, CABA	27.03.25
Arturo Stabile, FECOBA	Asuncion, CABA	27.03.25
Dina Sanchez, UTEP	UTEP Office	01.04.25
Public Ministry of Defense - CABA	Virtual	03.04.25

Informal Street Vending & Market Trading in Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires is the capital and largest city in Argentina. The metropolitan area (AMBA) is home to around 14 million people, and the capital district (CABA) to 3.1 million. Once among the world's wealthiest nations, since the late twentieth century, Argentina has faced persistent economic instability, including some of the highest inflation rates globally.[6]

Following free market reforms introduced in the 1990s, in 2001 a severe financial crisis hit the country [7], resulting in mass unemployment and a rapid rise in poverty levels. As formal employment collapsed, the informal economy expanded significantly and fuelled widespread protests and the rise of grassroots worker movements [8] . Although some recovery took place in the years that followed, informal employment remained widespread. **Two decades later, Argentina continues to struggle with high inflation rates, repeated sovereign debt defaults [9] and ongoing economic insecurity [10]**. Argentina is the biggest debtor to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and continues to be heavily reliant on borrowing money from the IMF [11].

Since taking office in 2023, far-right libertarian President Javier Milei has implemented a range of austerity and deregulation measures. This has included widespread cuts to subsidies, social protection programmes, and labour policies which have contributed to worsening poverty and inequality across the country [12]. In September 2024, over 52.9% of the population (more than 46 million people) were reported to be living in poverty [13], with the livelihoods of informal economy workers and women disproportionately affected [14].

While inflation and poverty rates have since dropped slightly, it is estimated that there are still 11.3 million people living in poverty, with 2.5 million in severe poverty [15]. 31.6% of the population is below the poverty line [16]. While public anger towards the government grows, Milei has been using authoritarian tactics to push measures through, suppressing protests and refusing dialogue with civil society and trade unions [17]. The formal economy continues to shrink and economic conditions worsen, and – after a period of decline in the 2010s - the informal economy is expanding as a survival strategy [18].]The ILO estimates that 51.6% of the total workforce are now engaged in informal employment, up from 47% in 2020.[19]

In Argentina, the term 'popular economy' has been adopted (in place of the 'informal economy') to reflect the systemic structural failure of the current economic system to provide decent work. Popular economy workers are those who have been excluded from traditional formal labour markets and employment and instead create their own means of work to earn a livelihood. Work tends to be informal and precarious, often self-managed or organised, community-based and mostly takes place in working-class neighbourhoods, rural areas and peripheries of cities [20]. It is made up of different economic units (means of work necessary to generate income) including cooperatives, recovered enterprises, family self-employment and informal self-employment. UTEP estimates that the popular economy constitutes 30% of the economically active population, representing at least 6 million people.[21]

"The system has no way of generating jobs."
– Vendor and UTEP leader

Anecdotal evidence indicates that there are different reasons for people turning to work in the informal vending economy in Buenos Aires:

The failure of the current economic system to provide formal employment opportunities. Many workers cite a failure of the current system to provide a modern, organised economy and the inability of past governments to effectively address systemic economic problems.

For many it is a question of survival – the popular economy is the only way to feed families and pay rent. Economic crises, rising inflation and austerity measures have pushed millions into the informal economy. Others join out of necessity due to life changes - such as job loss, migration or changes in family circumstances. Even some of those in formal working arrangements also undertake work in the popular economy to supplement their earnings. During crises like the COVID-19 pandemic the informal economy provided a lifeline for workers to fill the gap left by the state. Some workers have fallen out of the formal economy and seek a way back, while others have never had access to formal jobs due to a lack of education or alternative opportunities.

"We must recognize that the popular economy exists, that it provides a response and solution, and even during the pandemic, we were on the front lines of the battle, supporting what had to be supported in the territory without even a salary - "Love doesn't pay for food or the bills for our companions."
– Vendor and UTEP Leader

Women and migrants are disproportionately represented. Migrant workers might arrive in Argentina seeking formal employment, but face access barriers or discover that there are no such opportunities available. Many start selling on the street to survive and provide for their families. Women face exclusionary barriers to formal employment or challenges with access to childcare. Many are single mothers and sole breadwinners providing for their families.

For many, work in the informal economy has value beyond financial income. Many workers value the self-management of work, of community and of being part of a collective and shared response to exclusion from the formal labour market. For some, it is more than just survival – it is a way of life.

“When I became pregnant with my second child, I sold alfajores at traffic lights; the popular economy somehow saved me even without being part of the organization.”
– Vendor and UTEP Leader

"Why is street vending growing? Because I, as a mother, went to sell.. because my children wouldn't fill their bellies with my tears. It's the way out we women find."
– Woman Vendor

“Work and family problems are no longer individual but collective, so we chose the popular economy because we find collective answers to our problems.”
- Vendor

“Why have many of us chosen the popular economy? As single mothers, heads of households...in our workplaces we have spaces for children and we can work because our children are there. But we also have cafeterias, snack bars, tutoring, and adult high schools where many of us have been able to finish secondary school, and in many cases, we are the first generation in our families to have a university degree.”
– Vendor and UTEP Leader

“I love my job, I have the soul of a fairgoer. My brothers have worked all their lives...I can’t wait for the weekend to come so I can go to the fair.”
– Vendor

WORKER ORGANISATION

The Unión de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras de la Economía Popular (UTEP) is a national union representing workers in Argentina’s informal (‘popular’) economy. UTEP was formed over many years - bringing together movements, cooperatives and associations of workers that had formed in the early 2000s in response to their exclusion from formal employment and rural displacement. These workers collectively organised to claim rights and improve working conditions [22]. By 2011 the Confederación de Trabajadores de la Economía Popular (CTEP) was established as a national federation uniting many different organisations and workers in the popular economy [23]. Among them was El Movimiento de Trabajadores Excluidos (MTE) - a collective of workers excluded from the formal labour market across different sectors [24].

In 2019, grassroots movements that had emerged during resistance to neoliberal reforms and crisis in the 1990s and 2000s were brought together to form UTEP, including CTEP and MTE, and other movements such as Barrios de Pie, Corriente Clasista y Combativa and Frente Darío Santillán. Within UTEP, these organisations were united in a single national union to represent the interests of popular economy workers more effectively. The movement also maintains strong ties with political groups including Frente Patria Grande and Movimiento Evita. Unlike traditional unions, UTEP is organised around ‘productive’ branches or sectors, reflecting the self-managed and cooperative nature of work in the popular economy including:

TABLE 6: POPULAR ECONOMY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS	
OCCUPATION / SECTOR	ESTIMATED # IN ARGENTINA
Peasantry: working the land	250,000
Waste pickers	100,000
Street vendors: selling goods on public roads, public transport and in public squares	182,000
Artisans/craftspeople: artistically making objects and selling them on public streets or fairs	28,000
Feriantes: selling goods at open air market, craft fairs, shopping malls	29,000
Motorcyclists (delivery / transporting)	67,000
Recovered company workers: workers previously working for economic units belonging to capitalism, and then recovered by workers	12,000
Domestic and care work	910,000
Garment workers	180,000
Window cleaners	15,000
Self-build low-income housing	80,000
Neighbourhood improvement and habitat care	250,000
Popular microenterprises	50,000

The union now has an estimated 500,000 members nationwide. In 2021, UTEP was formally recognised by the Ministry of Labour as a representative body for the popular economy and granted registration with social recognition to mediate labour conflicts. Together with local leaders (‘referentes’) its activities are supported by a group of militantes – activists who dedicate themselves to social justice and advancement of the movement.

UTEP’s core mission is the self-organisation of workers and the defence of the rights of those excluded from the formal labour market. Under the banner “Tierra, Techo y Trabajo” (*Land, Housing and Work*) UTEP fights for the recognition and protection of popular economy workers. It advocates for systemic change for popular and community-based work to be valued and recognised as the third pillar of Argentina’s economy, alongside the public and private sector [26]. This recognition would ensure access to rights such as social security, paid leave, retirement and parental benefits. UTEP’s broader political vision sets out eight key objectives:

- Decent work – the right to work and earn a livelihood
- Supplementary social wage – to support income for excluded workers
- Union recognition – formal acknowledgement of worker representation
- People's parliaments (paritarias) – mechanisms for negotiation with the state
- Unity of all workers – including engagement with formal trade union centres (e.g. CGT)
- Community-based popular economy – economic units in which the means of work are in the hands of the popular sectors, poor and excluded
- Popular public policies – aligned with the needs of the excluded
- People's power – building resistance to exploitation, fighting exclusion, and building dignified lives to win rights

As a union made up of many smaller organisations, UTEP has recognised the need for strengthening internal unity to enable it to operate more cohesively as a single national movement. At its 2025 Congress, UTEP prioritised strengthening organisation within and between its branches to enable workers from the same sector from different organisations to build strategy and negotiate around key issues. UTEP is also actively working to strengthen links with the formal trade union movement – particularly Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) - to build joint programmes that unify informal and formal economy workers. The final session of the March 2025 UTEP Congress was held at the CGT headquarters, marking a symbolic shift in the coordination between formal and informal economy workers' movements and CGT's recognition of the popular economy.

"It's not about being "resigned" to the informal economy, but rather to create a new economy. Because the current system is not up to the task."
– UTEP Leader

Key Findings

NB: Unless otherwise noted all currency values are expressed in US dollars (USD$) or Argentinian Pesos (ARS$). Assuming exchange Rate 1 Argentine Peso = 0.00075693138USD$ / 1 USD = 1,321.25 ARS.

WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

The informal street vending and market trading economy is made up of a wide range of occupations and workers working across different workplaces.

Workplaces

There are different places in which vendors undertake their work.

- **Mobile ('ambulantes'):** some informal economy vendors move around to sell their goods, often using carts, trolleys, cars, baskets, backpacks and often selling smaller items (e.g. food, drinks, accessories). Work tends to be flexible and dependent on daily conditions.
- **Public spaces ('en la vía pública'):** informal economy vendors sell goods or services from sidewalks/pavements, in squares/plazas, parks, public transport and other open areas that are not privately owned and accessible to the public, mostly without official permits or licenses. They might use temporary stalls or shelters, but many simply lay out goods on the ground often using a blanket (called a 'manta'). Some vendors sell from outside their homes.
- **Informal fixed markets / formal fixed markets (ferias):** some sell goods from open air or sheltered fixed or semi-permanent stalls in informal or formal markets – including artisan markets. Vendors might have informal (or formal) agreements for the space with local authorities (or other key stakeholders) and might pay fees to trade in their space.

TABLE 7: WORKPLACE BY GENDER

WORKPLACE	WOMEN #	WOMEN %	MEN #	MEN %	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
Informal fixed market	115	48.1%	53	31.9%	168	41.5%
Public spaces	78	32.6%	67	40.4%	145	35.8%
Mobile	28	11.7%	34	20.5%	62	15.3%
Formal fixed market	18	7.5%	12	7.2%	30	7.4%
Total	239	100	166	100%	405	100%

The largest proportion of respondents come from informal fixed markets (41.5%) and vendors working in public spaces (35.8%), suggesting that these are the most common set-ups in Buenos Aires. Smaller proportions are made up of mobile vendors (15.3%) and those working in formal fixed markets (7.4%). Women are more commonly found to be working in informal fixed markets compared to men, while men tend to be found in greater numbers than women in public spaces and working mobile.

Occupations:

Most workers earn their living by selling goods or services (e.g. clothing alterations, masonry, general repairs). However, there are different types of vending occupations:

- **Manteros**: vendors who sell goods from the ground or on blankets ('manta') on pavements or in squares. Most are stationary and sell from one location, but the use of the 'manta' enables them to pack up goods quickly and move on, particularly if authorities arrive.
- **Ambulantes**: mobile vendors who sell items whilst moving, often using small carts or simply carrying the goods.
- **Feriantes/Puestero**: vendors operating fixed or semi-permanent stalls in open air markets selling goods such as clothing, household items, artisan goods. They can be formal or informal.
- **Artesanos/artesanas:** vendors selling handcrafted goods in artisan markets, often with fixed stalls or booths.
- **Armadores: 'stall owners'** – both those who own the materials that make up a stand and those who have (or claim ownership) over the right to build up a fair through formal or informal arrangements.
- **Helpers/day workers:** assisting vendors with transporting goods, setting up stalls.

The majority of those surveyed identified their main source of income as coming from their work as vendors (70.6%) and street vendors (21.5%). However, small proportions of workers reported that their main source of livelihood was their pension (4.2%) or formal employment (1%). These groups may not solely rely on earnings from the vending economy but might supplement or diversify their income through informal economy work. High inflation levels and austerity measures mean that pension income often does not meet the cost of living in Argentina. Those in formal employment might be underemployed or working multiple jobs due to formal wages being insufficient. **This highlights the fluid and overlapping nature of the formal and informal economy - informality co-exists with and supplements formal structures.**

TABLE 8: OCCUPATION BY GENDER						
OCCUPATION	**WOMEN #**	**WOMEN %**	**MEN #**	**MEN %**	**TOTAL #**	**TOTAL %**
Seller / vendor	177	74.4%	109	65.3%	286	70.6%
Street vendor	238	17l2%	46	27.5%	87	21.5%
Retirement pension	7	2.9%	3	1.8%	10	2.5%
Pension	5	2.1%	2	1.2%	7	1.7%
Formal employment	3	1.3%	1	0.6%	4	1%
Odd jobs / day labourer	0	0%	2	1.2%	2	0.5%
Masonry / general repairs	0	0%	2	1.2%	2	0.5%
Savings	1	0.4%	0	0%	1	**0.3%**
Clothing alterations	0	0%	1	0.6%	1	0.3%
Cooperative	1	0.4%	0	0%	1	0.3%
Adult/child care	1	0.4%	0	0%	1	0.3%
Entrepreneurship	1	0.4%	0	0%	1	0.3%
Cleaning/domestic work	1	0.4%	0	0%	1	0.3%
Taxi / passenger transport	0	0%	1	0.6%	1	0.3%
Total	**238**	**100%**	**167**	**100%**	**405**	**100%**

Goods and Services

There are a wide range of goods and services sold by traders and vendors. Around half (50.4%) of vendors report selling clothes and shoes, indicating that these could be both in high demand and also more accessible products to source, store and sell. Smaller proportions of respondents report selling prepared or non-perishable foods (9.5%) and crafts (7.1%).

TABLE 9: GOODS & SERVICES SOLD		
Goods / Service	**#**	**%**
Clothes and shoes	**207**	**50.4%**
Prepared foods/non-perishable food	**39**	**9.5%**
Crafts	**29**	**7.1%**
Other	**23**	**5.6%**
Gift shop / toy shop / book shop	**17**	**4.1%**
Kiosk/sweets	**16**	**3.9%**
Electronics, appliances	**12**	**2.9%**
Fruits, vegetables, meat, chicken, fish	**10**	**2.4%**
Cleaning supplies	**9**	**2.2%**
Beverages/Drinks	**8**	**2%**
Beauty products	**7**	**1.7%**
Jewellery	**6**	**1.5%**
Mobile / Mobile accessories	**4**	**1%**
Carpentry	**4**	**1%**
Sewing	**4**	**1%**
Traditional medicine / herbal	**4**	**1%**
Construction materials	**3**	**0.7%**
TOTAL	**411**	**100%**

Gender

Overall in Argentina, women tend to have a lower participation rate in the formal labour market - 50.4% compared to 68.3% for men [27]. However, ILO estimates indicate that in the informal economy the gender gap is closing and women now have a greater participation rate compared to men. In 2024, 51.9% of the total female workforce was engaged in informal employment compared to 51.3% of men [28]. This was confirmed by survey results – women make up over half (58.8%) of survey respondents, suggesting that the industry is more dominated by women.

TABLE 10: GENDER		
GENDER	#	%
Female	**240**	**58.8%**
Male	**168**	**41.2%**
Total	**408**	**100%**

Age

While the workforce is made up of a wide range of ages, the industry is predominantly composed of older workers. 70.1% of the workforce surveyed are over the age of 40. Older people might be working in the industry due to limited formal employment opportunities, the need to continue earning due to insufficient pension income, or because informal vending work serves many as a long-term livelihood strategy.

Older workers (aged over 50) are less likely to be mobile vendors, likely due to the physical demands of carrying goods and long hours on the move. Those aged over 60 are found in greater numbers in formal fixed markets compared to those of other ages – they are 2.6 times more likely to be in formal fixed markets than the youngest groups (aged 18-24). Formal fixed markets tend to provide more predictable income and greater protection, suggesting that seniority or longer-term involvement is associated with greater security and more stable vending positions. This might be due to greater experience, financial security or stronger networks enabling greater access to more secure, formalised vending spaces.

TABLE 11: AGE BY GENDER						
Age	Women #	Women %	Men #	Men %	Total #	Total %
18-24	14	6%	9	5.5%	**23**	**5.8%**
25-39	54	23%	43	26.1%	**97**	**24.3%**
40-49	59	25.1%	43	26.1%	**102**	**25.5%**
50-59	59	25.1%	38	23%	**97**	**24.3%**
60+	49	20.9%	32	19.4%	**81**	**20.3%**
TOTAL	**235**	**100%**	**165**	**100%**	**400**	**100%**

Marital Status

The majority (65%) of respondents identify themselves as 'single' and a smaller proportion (22.8%) are married. A large proportion of the workforce consists of unpartnered individuals, perhaps indicating delayed marriage, high separation rates or widowing. Women are more likely to report being widowed or separated compared to men, indicating a high prevalence of female headed households within the economy. Female headed households might face greater economic vulnerability due to bearing dual responsibilities of income generation and caregiving.

TABLE 12: MARITAL STATUS BY GENDER						
Marital Status	**Women #**	**Women %**	**Men #**	**Men %**	**Total #**	**Total %**
Single	152	63.3%	113	67.3%	**265**	**65%**
Married	51	21.3%	42	25%	**93**	**22.8%**
Divorced/separated	17	7.1%	8	4.8%	**25**	**6.1%**
Widowed	20	8.3%	5	3%	**25**	**6.1%**
TOTAL	**240**	**100%**	**168**	**100%**	**408**	**100%**

Disability Status

Although the majority (68.8%) of respondents report that neither them nor their family member had a disability, a significant minority (31.1%) do report disabilities within their households. This points to an important source of economic and care-related challenges – particularly in the informal economy in Argentina where workers tend to face greater access barriers to social protection, living costs are rising and the government has introduced major cuts to disability benefits.

Origins

TABLE 13: ORIGINS		
Origins	**#**	**%**
Buenos Aires	**211**	**51.5%**
Other countries	**134**	**32.7%**
Tucuman	**10**	**1.4%**
Santiago del Este	**9**	**2.2%**
Corrientes	**7**	**1.7%**
Misiones	**6**	**1.5%**
Chaco	**6**	**1.5%**
San Juan	**4**	**1.0%**
Santa Fe	**3**	**0.7%**
Entre Rios	**3**	**0.7%**
Cordoba	**3**	**0.7%**
Formosa	**3**	**0.7%**
Mendoza	**2**	**0.5%**
Jujuy	**2**	**0.5%**
Catamarca	**2**	**0.5%**
Salta	**2**	**0.5%**
La Rioja	**1**	**0.2%**
Rio Negro	**1**	**0.2%**
San Luis	**1**	**0.2%**
Total	**410**	**100%**

Around half (51.5%) of the workforce originates from Buenos Aires, underscoring the city's role as a key economic hub for livelihood opportunities, as well as strong community ties and networks amongst informal economy vendors. Although the majority (67.3%) of the workforce are from Argentina, there appears to be significant migration for work from neighbouring countries – notably Peru (17.1% of respondents), Paraguay (5.4%) and Bolivia (5.4%). A growing presence of migrants from countries in Africa – particularly Senegal – indicates growing diversification and the informal economy as a source of livelihood for new migrants. Anecdotal evidence suggest that economic challenges, political factors and existing social and community networks contribute to migration for work. Migrants might face barriers in accessing formal employment and so enter work in the informal vending economy.

Residence

The workforce tend to live close to their place of work. Just over half (54.1%) of respondents live within 0-5km of their workplace. This reflects the practical realities of informal vending – selling mainly takes place in public spaces and informal markets that are located in or near local communities. Many vendors also sell from outside their homes. Close proximity of home to work also reduces transport costs and travel time. Women are slightly more likely to live closer to their place of work compared to men, perhaps reflecting gendered care and domestic responsibilities which necessitate working near the home as well as strong community ties. Around 10% of vendors travel over 25km for work, likely seeking better selling opportunities or due to a lack of viable local work options.

TABLE 14: RESIDENCE		
RESIDENCE	**#**	**%**
0-5km	**219**	**54.1%**
6-10km	**58**	**14.3%**
11-15km	**33**	**8.2%**
16-20km	**31**	**7.7%**
21-25km	**24**	**5.9%**
Over 25km	**40**	**9.9%**
Total	**405**	**100%**

Nearly half (46.3%) of respondents live in working class informal or low-income neighbourhoods (‘barrios populares’) which tend to have limited infrastructure and access to services. The particularly high rate of mobile vendors living in such neighbourhoods (66.1%) compared to other workers suggests that mobile vendors tend to face greater economic insecurity and less stable housing conditions.

A majority (59.1%) of respondents report owning their homes. Mobile vendors are more likely to rent their homes, consistent with their higher residence in informal neighbourhoods and associated greater economic precarity. Renting tends to signal greater housing insecurity and lower resource levels. Workers in informal fixed markets show the highest homeownership rates – 71.4% reported owning their homes. This indicates a greater degree or relative economic stability or long-term settlement.

Travel to Work

Most workers travel to work via public transport (49.1%) or on foot or bike (32.8%). Women are more likely than men to travel on foot or by bike (36.8% vs 26.9%), whereas men have a greater use of privately owned vehicles compared to women (16.9% vs. 9.6%).

This reflects the close residence of many workers to their place of work, potential economic constraints in accessing ownership of private vehicles, and the urban setting in which workers live and work. Mobile vendors and informal market workers are more likely to travel on foot or by bike, whereas formal fixed market workers are more likely to use taxis - perhaps reflecting higher incomes and greater job stability allowing for private transport.

TABLE 15: TRAVEL TO WORK.

TRAVEL TO WORK	#	%
Public transport (‘colectivo’)	**196**	**49.1%**
On foot / bike	**131**	**32.8%**
Privately owned vehicle	**50**	**12.5%**
Taxi / pre-booked taxis	**22**	**5.5%**
Total	**399**	**100%**

Number of jobs

The majority of the workforce (81.7%) only have one job. This suggests that most workers are wholly reliant on earnings from the industry to sustain themselves. It also reflects the demanding nature of the work, often involving long hours and lacking sufficient time to undertake multiple jobs.

Workers in formal fixed markets are marginally more likely to report having more than one job compared to those in other workplaces, perhaps indicating that greater security or predictability of schedules allows time for other work, and greater access to networks that might facilitate multiple job opportunities.

Of those holding additional jobs, 46.3% report related informal activities as vendors or stall holders. There are also many other jobs identified including:

- Cleaning / home work: 9.5%
- Odd jobs / day labour: 8.2%
- Clothing alterations: 4.1%
- Masonry / home improvement: 5.4%
- Taxi / transportation services: 3.4%
- Adult / child care: 2%
- Other occupations: 21.1% - blacksmith, groceries employee, postal workers, various teaching jobs, administrative work and personal services such as manicure or hairdressing

TABLE 16: NUMBER OF JOBS BY GENDER

NUMBER OF JOBS	WOMEN #	WOMEN %	MEN #	MEN %	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
1	193	82.5%	133	80.6%	**326**	**81.7%**
2 or 3	40	17.1%	32	19.4%	**72**	**18.1%**
4 and over	1	0.4%	0	0%	**1**	**0.3%**
Total	**290**	**100%**	**253**	**100%**	**402**	**100%**

Additional jobs held by workers tend to be low paid and precarious forms of work, although some formal positions are also prevalent. This indicates the overlapping nature of the workforce in formal and informal labour markets. Additional jobs tend to be divided according to traditional gendered labour norms – women tend to dominate in cleaning, house work, and caregiving jobs while men are largely engaged in odd jobs, masonry and transportation.

Education

The majority of the workforce have achieved either secondary (54.3%) or primary (33.6%) levels of education. Very few workers have undertaken technical education (3.7%) or higher education (3%).

Informal economy vendors appear to face barriers in accessing or completing higher education. This is likely to restrict their access to formal employment and reinforce reliance on informal sector jobs. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that many workers have not completed secondary education or have left school early due to an economic need to move into paid work early. Workers in formal fixed markets have the highest education levels - 9.7% of formal market workers have completed higher education - reflecting the differences in social capital and access across the economy.

Only around one-quarter (26.7%) of respondents have undergone any form of additional job-related training or qualifications. Without additional training, vendors are left without opportunities to develop their skills, and potential to improve or diversify their opportunities. Men are more likely to report having received additional training, reflecting gendered access in opportunities for skills development. Additional training or qualifications identified included: creative, artistic and manual skills (39.5%); technical and mechanical skills (20.2%); skills in health, safety and social care (18.4%); ICT skills and digital competencies (11%); and business, entrepreneurship training and security (8.3%).

Gender roles are evident in the types of training acquired by vendors. Women more frequently report training in creative, artistic and manual skills compared to men (56.7% vs 11.6%). Men are more likely to have technical and mechanical skills compared to women (44.2% vs 4.6%).

TABLE 17: EDUCATION LEVEL BY GENDER

EDUCATION	WOMEN #	WOMEN %	MEN #	MEN %	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
No formal education / Basic literacy	14	5.9%	8	4.8%	**22**	**5.4%**
Primary education	76	31.9%	60	35.9%	**136**	**33.6%**
Secondary education	133	55.9%	87	52.1%	**220**	**54.3%**
Technical education	7	2.9%	8	4.8%	**15**	**3.7%**
Higher education (university)	8	3.4%	4	2.4%	**12**	**3%**
Total	**238**	**100%**	**167**	**100%**	**405**	**100%**

Experience

There are a wide range of experience levels in the industry. However, nearly half (46.1%) of workers have been in their current job for between 1-7 years. Only 13.4% have been in their current job for 21 years or more. This indicates high fluidity within the sector. Long-term work tends to be uncommon, likely due to insecure and fluctuating economic conditions or a lack of formal protections. Economic necessity might force workers to change jobs over time. It also suggests that more workers are accessing work in the sector. Although the average overall tenure of workers of 10.6 years indicates that while some are relatively new, a significant proportion maintain jobs for extended periods.

TABLE 18: YEARS IN CURRENT JOB BY GENDER.						
YEARS IN CURRENT JOB	WOMEN #	WOMEN %	MEN #	MEN %	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
1-3 years	56	24.2%	37	22.3%	**93**	**23.4%**
4-7 years	54	23.4%	36	21.7%	**90**	**22.7%**
8-12 years	54	23.4%	40	24.1%	**94**	**23.7%**
13-17 years	20	8.7%	18	10.8%	**38**	**9.6%**
18-20 years	19	8.2%	10	6%	**29**	**7.3%**
21+ years	28	12.1%	25	15.1%	**53**	**13.4%**
Total	**231**	**100%**	**166**	**100%**	**397**	**100%**

TABLE 19: YEARS IN INDUSTRY BY GENDER						
YEARS IN INDUSTRY	WOMEN #	WOMEN %	MEN #	MEN %	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
1-3 years	54	24%	33	20.4%	**87**	**22.5%**
4-7 years	55	24.4%	36	22.2%	**91**	**23.5%**
8-12 years	50	22.2%	38	23.5%	**88**	**22.7%**
13-17 years	18	8%	23	14.2%	**41**	**10.6%**
18-20 years	21	9.3%	7	4.3%	**28**	**7.2%**
21+ years	27	12%	25	15.4%	**52**	**13.4%**
Total	**225**	**100%**	**162**	**100%**	**387**	**100%**

Women tend to be newer in their current jobs compared to men who tend to have a longer tenure – perhaps due to having fewer interruptions in working lives. Mobile vendors also tend to have the longest average tenure (15.6 years) in their current jobs compared to those in other workplaces, with the flexible and mobile nature of the work enabling them to adapt easily according to market conditions.

Similarly, there are a high proportion of new entrants in the industry. Just under half (46%) of respondents report working in the industry for 7 years or less. Rising economic need due to rising inflation levels and an absence of formal employment opportunities appear to be driving more people into work in the informal economy. Despite this, average tenure of 10.8 years shows that a significant number of workers remain in the industry over the long term. Work in the informal vending economy is not just a short-term solution, but a long-term livelihood strategy for many.

Organisation

UTEP estimates that only 1 million of the estimated 6 million people working in the popular economy across Argentina are organised [29]. Low levels of organisation is evident from survey results. 68.7% of respondents report not being members of any organisation representing their interests at work. Women, mobile vendors and those working in public spaces tend to be better organised - perhaps reflecting a greater reliance on collective structures for protection and support for more vulnerable groups. This lack of organisation weakens vendors' ability to negotiate rights, demand policy inclusion or access social protection and indicates significant barriers to organisation – including geographic fragmentation of the workforce, legal precarity and lack of recognition of work, and potential fear of reprisal amongst the workforce.

Of those who are members of representative organisations, the most common affiliations include MTE (71.4%), UTEP (18.5%) as well as smaller movements such as Movimiento Evita (4.2%), Vendedores Ambulantes e Informales Organizados (VAIO) (2.5%), cooperatives (1.7%), and Unión de Ambulantes y Trabajadores de la Organización (UATO) (0.8%).

LIVELIHOODS

Trading Arrangements

Vendors sell from a range of trading spaces and set-ups. The most common trading set-up involves selling directly from the ground or a blanket ('manta') – a cloth laid out to display goods – making up just under half (44.9%) of trading set-ups. These set-ups tend to require minimal investment and enable easy entry into vending, but are also more precarious and insecure. Ground selling offers little protection from theft, enforcement from authorities, or weather conditions, and indicates a lack of access to more secure, regulated selling environments.

Just under one-quarter (23.8%) report selling from a table, with smaller proportions (13.6%) selling from a fixed outdoor stand. These set-ups require more resources and might indicate a longer tenure in specific markets or greater security in space allocation.

TABLE 20: TRADING SPACE		
TRADING SPACE	**#**	**%**
Floor/blanket (manta)	**181**	**44.9%**
Table	**96**	**23.8%**
Fixed outdoor stand	**55**	**13.6%**
Mobile	**30**	**7.4%**
Cart	**24**	**6%**
Fixed indoor stand	**9**	**2.2%**
Other	**3**	**0.7%**
Dismountable stand	**3**	**0.7%**
Walk in galleries	**1**	**0.2%**
Backpack	**1**	**0.2%**
TOTAL	**403**	**100%**

The division of trading set-ups reflects broader structural inequalities, where women occupy the most precarious and lowest-capital positions within the informal economy. Women are more likely to sell from the ground, while men are more likely than women to sell from a cart, table and open air stands, indicating greater access to infrastructure, mobility and physical capacity.

The type of selling set-up is also associated with the permanence of the trading environment. Public space, informal market and mobile workers are most likely to sell from the floor / blanket or from a table. Comparatively, around half of formal fixed market workers (51.7%) sell from open air stands, with smaller numbers reporting selling from a table.

Overall, most vendors (78.9%) do not pay for their trading space. However, payment is heavily influenced by workplace type. Formal market workers are more likely to pay, reinforcing the link between formality of work and financial obligations. 70% of formal market workers report paying for their space. Comparatively, only 21.2% of public space workers, 18.8% of informal market workers, and just 1.8% of mobile vendors pay for the trading space. These workers largely operate in spaces which are not governed by formal arrangements or regulations.

There is high variability in how much vendors pay for trading space. Monthly costs vary widely and can range from ARS$1.5-400,000 (*equivalent to USD$0-293.37*) – an average monthly overall cost of ARS$19804 (USD$14.53). There is a lack of standardisation in the fees paid, indicating informal or possibly exploitative arrangements in payment for trading space, as well as the differing nature of spaces being used for vending.

Vendors pay different bodies for trading space. Municipal or local government agents are the most common entity paid in exchange for trading space – reported by 42.5% of respondents. However, many vendors also pay non-state actors, such as stall owners / holders (16.3%) or market organisers (commonly called 'armadores') (8.8%). There appear to be fragmented governance structures, with trading spaces sometimes privately owned or managed and often informal. Such arrangements pose risks of unregulated fee collections and problematic power dynamics.

Despite the diversity in bodies collecting payments for trading space, monthly average payments appear fairly similar across payee types, although market organisers tend to charge the lowest fees.

TABLE 21: TRADING SPACE PAYEES		
PAYEE	AVERAGE (ARS$)	USD$
Local government/agent of local government	$27,843.24	$20.4
Stall Owner	$27,934.48	$20.5
Market organiser	$24,562.50	$18

Licensing and Registration

Few vendors have any type of formal registration. 85.2% of respondents report no municipal permit or registration. There are some differences between workplaces. Mobile vendors tend to be the least registered group – only 6.5% held any form of registration. Comparatively formal fixed market vendors are most likely to be registered – 46.4% report are registered. **This suggests the majority of vendors are operating outside of formal systems.**

Despite low overall registration rates, those who are registered report a range of different permit types including:

- '*Canones*' (26.1%): a fee typically paid for vendors to occupy a space in a certain area (particularly popular markets or public spaces). There are two different types – formal, regulated fees which are usually paid monthly to municipal governments or an office of the municipal government, and informal fees which are usually paid to 'armadores' who set up the fair.
- *Municipal or city permits / agreements / contracts / licenses* (26.1%) – mostly from recognised bodies including the Ministry of Environment and Public Space and city government, some of which are renewed annually.
- *Unspecified permits / credentials* (15.2%) – including 'carnet de permiso precario' – temporary or provisional permit cards granted by local authorities to allow informal vendors to operate in public spaces without full recognition.

There appears to be fragmentation and a lack of standardisation in the formal recognition of vendors and their selling spaces across Buenos Aires. Even when vendors report being 'registered' some might not be formally recognised by the state, but rather participating in informal systems of registration.

Loans

Few vendors report taking up loans to support their vending activities. Just 21.2% of respondents had taken out a loan for their business. **Most of the workforce appear to rely on self-financing**, perhaps due to a lack of need, limited access to formal credit, or aversion to taking on high levels of debt due to distrust of financial institutions.

Among those who have not taken out loans, the vast majority (72.6%) report that they have been able to self-finance their business. 7.8% report loans being unnecessary due to the use of free merchandise – reflecting the highly informal nature of selling arrangements.

Of those who have taken out a loan, the overall majority (85.5%) use loans for productive investment - to buy goods or tools for their business. A smaller proportion (8.7%) use loans to repay debt or purchase food. Around half of these respondents are still repaying loans - with women (57.4%) more likely to still owe money compared to men (44.8%). Women appear to face greater repayment burdens due to lower earnings or more limited financial support networks. Mobile and informal fixed market vendors – who tend to have less financial stability - are also more likely to still be repaying compared to those in formal fixed markets.

Money lenders and digital banks / apps dominate lending. Most loans come from money lenders (29.6%) and banks or financial apps (27.2%), with some loans also coming from friends and family (24.7%). Women are more likely to borrow money from formal or traceable lending sources (digital banks / apps) - 32.7% of women sourced loans from these sources compared to 19.4% of men. Comparatively, men tend to be more likely to use fast-access money lenders – 41.9% of men sourced loans here compared to 22.4% of women.

Low loan uptake and reliance on informal or risky lenders indicates exclusion from financial access. Formal financial systems / loan schemes are underutilized or inaccessible, particularly for the most precarious workers. Women are more likely to carry ongoing debt and prefer more formal lending routes, while men tend to resort to informal money lenders. Vendors in more precarious and mobile situations face greater repayment burdens, pointing to greater income instability.

Income and Expenses

When asked to provide an indication of gross income (*money received before paying other people or expenses*) and net income (*amount of remaining money after making all these other payments*) there were wide ranging responses, suggesting that earnings fluctuate highly. Overall, it was found that earnings tend to be low and vendors often struggle to make sufficient income to sustain themselves. The financial crisis being faced across the country is hitting people hard on the streets, with a general feeling amongst vendors that 'nothing is sold.' This overall decline in retail and consumption is reflected in data from Argentina's national statistics agency INDEC, with reported declines in the sales of clothing, footwear, textiles and wholesale sales. [30]

Gross income tends to be low. The majority (61.8%) of respondents report a gross income of between ARS$0-50,000 per month (equivalent to USD$36.24). Smaller numbers of vendors (29.2%) report a higher gross monthly income of over ARS$700,000 (USD$513). Mobile vendors face the lowest gross income – 77.4% report earnings in the lowest bracket. This is likely due to unstable selling conditions, an inconsistent customer base and sales of lower-cost products. The wide variation in earnings indicates significant disparities within the informal economy workforce, with some able to earn significantly more than others due to higher-margin goods or more profitable locations.

After accounting for daily work expenses, net income among the workforce drops significantly. There are far fewer higher earnings and the share of workers in the lowest earning bracket (ARS$0-50,000 per month - USD$36.24) increases to 68.2%. This is striking when compared to national income standards. 81% of the workforce report earning ARS$400,000 (USD$289.95) or less per month, significantly lower than average monthly earnings across the country - ARS$592570.7 (USD$429.5) [31]. This is also significantly lower that the gross monthly national minimum wage - ARS$ 322,000 (USD$ 233.4). [32]

TABLE 22: GROSS INCOME BY GENDER								
NET MONTHLY INCOME	WOMEN #	WOMEN %	MEN #	MEN %	NOT CLARIFIED	NOT CLARIFIED	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
0-$50000	155	64.6%	123	73.2%	**5**	**71.4%**	**283**	**68.2%**
51000-100000	6	2.5%	1	0.6%	**0**	**0**	**7**	**1.7%**
$101000 - $400000	37	15.4%	8	4.8%	**1**	**14.3%**	**46**	**11.1%**
$401000 - $700000	14	5.8%	14	8.3%	**0**	**0%**	**28**	**6.7%**
$701000-$1.000.000	8	3.3%	9	5.4%	**0**	**0%**	**17**	**4.1%**
More than $1.000.001	20	8.3%	13	7.7%	**1**	**14.3%**	**34**	**8.2%**
Total	**240**	**100%**	**168**	**100%**	**7**	**100%**	**415**	**100%**

The vast majority of the workforce operate below the national minimum wage and average national income. Workers lack capacity for savings, investment or debt repayment and are highly vulnerable to economic shocks. **There is also high variability in vendors' earnings from day to day.** Over half (55.4%) of vendors report earning over 4.5 times on good day compared to a bad day.

Vendors' earnings are hit hard by payment of expenses. Typically the biggest expense for vendors is the payment of suppliers – 83.4% of overall income is spent on the payment of suppliers. Formal market workers tend to spend the least on suppliers – just 72.9% of expenses compared to over 90% for workers in other workplaces. This indicates that formal market workers have greater supply of stocks, greater access to wholesale products, and make more payments on a daily basis.

Most vendors also pay smaller expense payments on a daily basis – this includes payments for trading space, social security, storage, vehicle expenses, fines or bribes to police, and other workers. Those working in public spaces and mobile are more likely to make payments to police, whereas vendors in informal / formal fixed markets are more likely to be paying taxes, social security payments, space rental, storage and vehicle payments.

Earnings are also low because vendors face limited opportunities for selling. They might only work at particular times of day, or on particular days of the week due to customer demand or market arrangements, restricting opportunities for them to earn an income.

TABLE 23: SOURCE OF GOODS.		
SOURCE OF GOODS	**#**	**%**
Large wholesale shop/market	**236**	**57.8%**
Obtain for free	**79**	**19.4%**
Informal market/vendor	**56**	**13.7%**
Produced by myself or family member	**25**	**6.1%**
Small business	**8**	**2%**
Bought in another country	**1**	**0.2%**
Catalogue	**1**	**0.2%**
Depends on the occasion	**1**	**0.2%**
Used	**1**	**0.2%**
Total	**408**	**100%**

Just over half (57.8%) of vendors report obtaining goods from large wholesale shops or markets. This enables vendors to purchase goods in bulk at lower prices. A smaller proportion (19.4%) report obtaining goods for free, or from other informal markets/vendors (13.7%). This highlights the interdependence between formal and informal economies – much of the informal vending economy is embedded and integrated within formal supply chains, driving sales in wholesale markets.

TABLE 24: COMMUNITY KITCHEN USE BY GENDER						
COMMUNITY KITCHEN	**WOMEN #**	**WOMEN %**	**MEN #**	**MEN %**	**TOTAL #**	**TOTAL %**
No	170	76.2%	130	80.3%	**300**	**77.9%**
Occasionally	39	17.5%	19	11.7%	**58**	**15.6%**
Every week	7	3.1%	10	6.2%	**17**	**4.4%**
More than once a week	7	3.1%	3	1.9%	**10**	**2.6%**
TOTAL	**223**	**100%**	**162**	**100%**	**408**	**100%**

IN-DEPTH PROFILES

A number of in-depth interviews were conducted with vendors working in different set-ups. These are intended to provide an illustrative picture of the nature of livelihoods within the industry.

AMBULANTES / MOBILE VENDORS

Lucia has been selling for 35 years and works between 5-6 days each week, up to 12 hours each day. Her biggest expenses are the payment of suppliers, other workers and for storage of goods. Earnings vary from day to day, but on a typical day she can earn around USD$17.

Julio reports working every day to make ends meet. He has taken out a loan to support his business at a very high interest rate and is currently still repaying it. Other than loan repayments, he tries to make savings to reinvest in his business and repay his loan (where possible), and pays suppliers and for mobile data. His typical income after expenses are paid varies widely – on a slow day it can be as low as USD$2.1 although on a good day he can earn much higher.

Dominique has been in the industry for a long time and sells goods across different municipalities. She does not have significant expenses – just the payment of suppliers - however low earnings from her work mean that she is not left with much at the end of the day and some days she can earn nothing.

Eva reports some of the highest gross income, although she only works four days a week and for 3 hours on each of these days. Despite this, she has few expenses and charges a higher price for her products which means on some days she can earn around USD$66 per day.

Name	Lucia		Julio		Dominique		Eva	
Date	4/1/2025		4/1/2025		4/1/2025		4/1/2025	
Location	Once		Once		Moreno		Moreno	
Fair/Market	Peron		Mitre		Different municipalities		Mercedes, Luján, Rodriguez	
Items Sold	Children's clothing, flip-flops		Clothes		Clothes, sheets, towels, dishcloths		Wallets, fanny packs, backpacks, socks	
Trading Set-Up	Table and cart		Moving around		Moving around		Bag and bicycle	
Time worked in this job	35	Years	11	Years	44	Years	40	Years
Hours worked per day	12	Hours	8	Hours	6	Hours	3	Hours
Average price (per product sold)	2000	ARS	10,000	ARS	8000	ARS	6000	ARS
Average number of goods sold (per day)	50	Items	5	Items	5	Items	20	Items
Loan (amount)	0	ARS	500,000	ARS	0	ARS	0	ARS
Period of loan (years)	0	Years	1	Years	0	Years	0	Years
Interest Rate %	0	%	50	%	0	%	0	%
	280	Days	365	Days	312	Days	208	Days
Expenses (Pesos ARS$)								
Interest Rate		0		250,000		0		0
Loan Payments		0		500,000		0		0
Savings to reinvest in business (per week)	0	0	40000	2,080,000	0	0		0
Suppliers (per month)	100,000	1,200,000	400,000	4,800,000	600,000	7,200,000	450,000	5,400,000
Fines/bribes (per day)	1000	280,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taxes (municipal/customs) (per month)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
License/registration (per month)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other workers(por dia)	20,000	5,600,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Storage of goods (per day)	50,000	14,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bathrooms (per day)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vehicle for vending (oer week)	0	0	0.00	0	0	0	0	0
Other payments (e.g. mobile data) (per month)	10,000.00	120,000	20,000.00	240,000	0	0	0	0
Total Annual Expenses		**21,200,000**		**7,870,000**		**7,200,000**		**5,400,000**
Annual Income (per day /year)	**100,000**	**28,000,000**	**50,000**	**18,250,000**	**40,000**	**12,480,000**	**120,000**	**24,960,000**
Annual Income Less Expenses		6,800,000		10,380,000		5,280,000		19,560,000
Daily net income (ARS)		24,286		28,438		16,923		94,038
Daily net income (USD)		17		20		12		66

IN-DEPTH PROFILES

MANTEROS

Maria works fewer days over the course of the year, but works longer hours (14 hours) on these days. Comparatively, **Davide** works more frequently during the week, but sells for just 1 hour per day. The short working time limits the opportunity to earn.

Some products that vendors sell might have fixed prices, but a lot of the time customers will negotiate prices which makes it difficult to estimate the prices products are sold for typically.

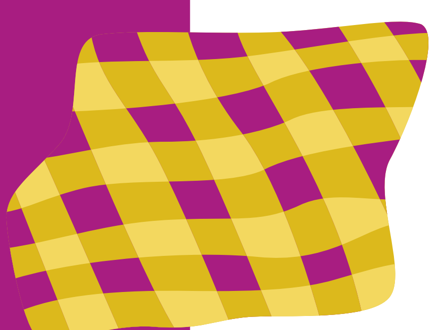
Both **Maria** and **Davide** sell from a blanket on the ground. The highly informal nature of work means that there are very few expenses associated with selling, other than payments to suppliers, fines/bribes to police, goods storage and bathroom use. However, earnings vary widely depending on the location and hours worked.

Maria estimated a daily gross income of between $ARS65,000-80,000. After expenses are paid, net income varies widely – on some days it can be as low as $ARS10,000 (USD$7) per day.

On a very busy day with high sales, earnings can be as high as $ARS70,000 (USD$49) per day.

Davide estimated a gross income between $ARS 220,00-250,000. Net income can vary widely. On slow days it can be as low as $ARS10,000 (USD$7) and on busy days it can be as high as $ARS130,000 (USD$91).

However, sometimes – as can be seen in this example – Davide doesn't make enough to cover daily expenses and ends up losing money after all expenses are calculated.



Name	Maria		Davide	
Date	3/31/2025		3/31/2025	
Location	Chacarita		Once	
Goods Sold	Clothes		Clothes	
Trading Set-Up	Manta'		Manta'	
Time in Job	6	Years	0	Years
Hours worked per day	14	Hours	1	Hours
Price (per product sold)	1000	ARS		ARS
Average number of goods sold (per day)		ARS		ARS
Estimated gross income before expenses (per day)	72500	ARS	23,500	ARS
Loan (amount)	0	ARS	0	ARS
Period of loan (years)	0	Años	0	Years
Interest rate %	0	%	0	%
Days worked per year	104	Dias	224	Dias
Costos (Pesos)				
Interest Rate		0		0
Loan Repayments		0		0
Savings to reinvest in business (per week)	0.00	0	0	0
Suppliers (per week)	20.00	1,040	0	0
Fines/bribes (per day)	0	0	1,000	224,000
Taxes (municipal/customs) (per month)	20,000	240,000	0	0
License/registration (per month)	0	0	0	0
Payment for trading space (per month)	0	0	0	0
Other workers (per day)	0	0	0	0
Storage of goods (per day)	0	0	25,000	5,600,000
Bathrooms (per day)	0	0	150.00	33,600
Other payments (e.g mobile data) (per month)	0	0	0	0
Total Annual Expenses		241,040		5,857,600
Annual Income				
Annual Income (per day /year)	72,500	7,540,000	23,500	5,264,000
Net Income Less Expenses		7,298,960		-593,600
Daily Net Income (ARS)		70,182		-2,650
Daily Net Income (USD)		49		-2

FERIANTES

Josua only works two days a week, but the days tend to be long – he can work up to 16 hours each day. Daily gross income varies widely, and is often affected by the weather, season or broader market conditions. On some days he can make up to ARS$48,000 ($USD34) per day in sales, although on some days gross income can be as low as $ARS10,000 (USD$7).

When he is able, **Josua** tries to make savings towards reinvesting in his business – sometimes ARS$20,000 (USD$14) per month. He only pays suppliers when he is able to make some savings and has leftover money – income is 'reinvested' to purchase more stock for selling.

Working in a market, **Josua** faces much higher daily expenses compared to other vendors – he often has to pay the police, registration for his business, for storage, cleaning, bathrooms, and space rental.

After expenses are paid, on a typical day he might be left with ARS$15,000 ($USD11) although it varies widely. Sometimes he can earn up to ARS$50,000 (USD$35), although on other days he might go home with nothing.

Name	**Josua**	
Date		
Location	San Martin, Lomas de Zamora	
Feria / Market	San Martin, Lomas de Zamora	
Items Sold	Lingerie and children's clothing	
Number of market stalls	1	Stalls
Time in Job	9	Years
Hours worked per day	16	Hours
Average price (per product sold)	8000	ARS
Average number of goods sold (per day)	6	Items
Loan (amount)	0	ARS
Period of loan (years)	0	Años
Interest rate %	0	%
Days worked per year	104	Dias
Expenses (Pesos ARS$)		
Interest Rate		0
Loan Repayments		0
Suppliers (per month)	0	0
Fines/bribes (per day)	3,500	364,000
Taxes (municipal/customs) (per month)	0	0
License/registration (per month)	9,000	108,000
Security (per year)	0	0
Other workers (per day)	0	0
Storage of goods (per month)	50,000	600,000
Security (per day)	0	0
Cleaning (per day)	15,000	1,560,000
Bathrooms (per day)	300.00	31,200
Payment for space (per month)	6,000	72,000
Wate/electricity (per day)	0	0
Other payments (e.g. mobile data) (per month)	50,000.00	600,000
Total Annual Expenses		**3,335,200**
Annual Income		
Annual Income (per day/year)	**48,000**	**4,992,000**
Annual Income Less Expenses		**1,656,800**
Daily Net Income (ARS)		**15,931**
Daily Net Income (USD)		**11**

Household Income and Expenses

The majority of the workforce are solely reliant on their work as vendors as their main source of household income. Most of the respondents are primary breadwinners - 87.4% of respondents reported that their work was the main source of income. Smaller proportions of the workforce are reliant on the informal worker of others (6.3%) or the formal salary of others (3.7%). 2.6% reported that they are reliant on their pension as the main source of household income. **The reliance on earnings solely from the vending economy increases household vulnerability to shocks or disruptions to work, which are more frequent due to the current economic situation in Argentina.**

The majority (74.7%) of respondents report having between 0-3 dependents reliant on them, although 22.7% also report 4-6 dependents. Single individuals are more likely to report higher numbers of dependents, perhaps indicating that they are supporting extended family members, or sending money back to family (rural or abroad).

On top of low earnings, most vendors also report significant household expenses. The illustrative examples included (below) highlight the high expense costs that vendors can face. All vendors report being the primarily family breadwinners but face significant expenses – including food, transport costs, rent/housing, school fees and social security payments. Household expenses vary from person to person, and higher numbers of dependents significantly increases living expenses – but it can range from USD$225 to USD$1293 per month.

Household Expenses							
Primary Family Breadwinner (Y/N)		Y		Y		Y	
Number of dependents		2	Persons	12	Persons	2	Persons
Living Expenses	Food (per week)	75000	3,900,000	119500	6,214,000	80000	4,160,000
	Transport / Travel (per day)	1000	280,000	600	219,000	1254	130,416
	Rent / Housing (per month)	100000	1,200,000	280000	3,360,000	300000	3,600,000
	Children's school fees (per month)	0	0	0	0	200000	2,400,000
	Social security payments (per month)	0	0	78000	936000	9000	108000
Annual Household Expenses (ARS)			5,380,000		10,729,000		10,398,416
Monthly Household Expenses (USD)			314.713671		627.6139375		608.2757768

Household Expenses								
Primary Family Breadwinner (Y/N)	Y		Y		Y		Y	
Number of dependents	3	Persons	2	Persons	5	Persons	5	Persons
Living Expenses	150000	7,800,000	70000	3,640,000	300000	15,600,000	200000	10,400,000
	8000	2,496,000	1000	208,000	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	250000	3,000,000	150000	1,800,000
	0	0	0	0	2000	24,000	30000	360,000
	0	0	0	0	290000	3480000	0	0
Annual Household Expenses (ARS)		10,296,000		3,848,000		22,104,000		12,560,000
Monthly Household Expenses (USD)		602.284751		225.096321		1293.016914		734.721880

WORKING CONDITIONS & EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Working Time

There are a wide range of reported working hours. On average vendors work 8.6 hours per day. However, over half (57.9%) of the workforce report working 8 hours or less.

Gender differences are evident. On average, women work 8.3 hours a day, compared to 8.9 hours per day for men. However, a higher proportion of women (11.4%) report working 13+ hours a day compared to 6.7% of men, suggesting greater variability in women's working hours. Fewer men work 13+ hours per day but still report longer average workdays.

Workplace has an influence on working hours. Those working in public spaces tend to have the highest overall working hours – 60.6% report working 9 hours or more, averaging at 10 hours per day. This is likely due to extended hours to attract customers, with no fixed timings for selling. Those in informal fixed markets tend to have the shortest working hours – 70.1% report working 8 hours or less per day. This is likely due to structured market hours or selling aligned with specific times when customers are around – for example at the end or start of the school day.

TABLE 25: WORKING HOURS BY GENDER

WORKING HOURS	WOMEN #	WOMEN %	MEN #	MEN %	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
3-5 hours	60	26.2%	24	14.7%	**84**	**21.4%**
6-8 hours	72	31.4%	71	43.6%	**143**	**36.5%**
9-12 hours	71	31%	57	35%	**128**	**32.7%**
13-16 hours	25	10.9%	9	5.5%	**34**	**8.7%**
17+ hours	1	0.4%	2	1.2%	**3**	**0.8%**
Total	**229**	**100%**	**163**	**100%**	**392**	**100%**

TABLE 26: WORKING DAYS BY GENDER						
WORKING DAYS	WOMEN #	WOMEN %	MEN #	MEN %	TOTAL #	TOTAL %
1	8	3.4%	8	4.9%	**16**	**4%**
2	97	41.3%	41	25.2%	**138**	**34.7%**
3	19	8.1%	11	6.8%	**30**	**7.5%**
4	16	6.8%	6	3.7%	**22**	**5.5%**
5	16	6.8%	15	9.2%	**31**	**7.8%**
6	52	22.1%	51	31.3%	**103**	**25.9%**
7	27	11.5%	31	19%	**58**	**14.6%**
Total	**235**	**100%**	**163**	**100%**	**298**	**100%**

On average, most vendors work 4 or 5 days each week. However, there is a clear polarisation in working patterns. 34.7% report working 2 days per week, while 40.5% report working 6 or 7 days per week. Some workers appear to have limited access to consistent work throughout the week, or have other duties or responsibilities, while others work without sufficient rest time, likely due to economic necessity. On average women work nearly a full day less per week than men (3.8 days vs. 4.6 days) perhaps due to unpaid domestic/family responsibilities, or barriers to consistent work due to limited access to market spaces.

Differences are evident dependent on the workplace. Mobile vendors are most likely to work the longest weeks – 62.7% report working 6 or 7 days a week. However, there is high variability across all workplaces in days worked, reflecting the unpredictable nature of vending. Workers might have to work long hours to make ends meet, are not able to work sufficient hours to earn an income, or are reliant on the economy as additional work to supplement their income from other sources.

Despite this, working hours tend to be regular. Only 22.2% of workers report working irregular hours, with men more likely to report irregular hours (25.6%) compared to women (19.8%). Mobile vendors also appear to have the most irregular working hours amongst all vendors.

Employment Arrangements

The industry is mainly made up informal own-account work. 91.4% of respondents describe themselves as own account workers, and the majority (95.9%) make their earnings from clients or customers (direct sales) rather than wages (structured employee-employer relationships).

Small numbers of the workforce work in family arrangements (4.9%), likely involving sharing responsibilities at stalls or vending spaces. Anecdotal evidence suggests that families often coordinate to rotate shifts to cover working hours collectively out of economic necessity – with multiple household members working to make ends meet. **Paid employment is rare** – only 3.4% report being in paid employment (receiving wages).

In line with these findings, work agreements tend to be non-existent. The vast majority (94.6%) of respondents report that they do not have an employment agreement. Those working in formal markets are most likely to have such agreements, reflecting greater levels of formalisation in such settings. Of the small number who did have agreements, a majority (71.4%) report that these are verbal agreements rather than written.

PROBLEMS AT WORK & ISSUES ‘IN FOCUS’

Across survey results, focus groups, and interviews many workplaces problems were identified by workers. These results are represented in the table, and discussed in detail below.

TABLE 27: KEY ISSUES AT WORK		
KEY ISSUES	**#**	**%**
Lack of infrastructure and basic services	**150**	**37.2%**
Social and institutional barriers	**141**	**35%**
Conflict between workers	**47**	**11.7%**
Market changes / country situation	**40**	**9.9%**
Financial and resource constraints	**25**	**6.2%**
Total	**403**	**100%**

Market Infrastructure & Services

A lack of infrastructure and basic services is the most frequently reported problem amongst vendors – making up 37.2% of problems identified. The lack of a guaranteed trading spaces or proper shelter exposes vendors to harsh weather and changing environmental conditions (rain, sun, cold, extreme heat, wind). Low earnings and high costs leave them unable to buy necessary resources (i.e. suncream) to protect themselves from the elements. This challenge is becoming more severe with the changing climate. Poor weather and lack of shelter or selling infrastructure affects health as well as ability to work or sell. Sales appear to drop significantly during bad weather.

“If it rains, we don’t eat.”

“Weather worsens mobility and safety.”

“You have to work on the street, endure sun and rain. I’m often moved by seeing mothers with their babies and elderly people selling.” – Vendor, CABA

Public spaces lack basic facilities for vendors - including electricity, running water and storage facilities. Even in formalised markets, municipalities fail to provide the necessary infrastructure for vendors to operate. There is also a lack of gender separated, free toilets available for vendors, and storage to store goods to keep safe overnight – forcing many vendors to travel long distances carrying heavy goods.

ISSUE IN FOCUS

Overall, vendors lack access to infrastructure in their places of work:

- **86.1% do not have access to functional water in their workplace.** Those working in informal fixed markets are most likely to lack access, with 91.5% reporting no access to functional running water.
- **89.7% report no access to functional electricity.** Those working in public spaces (93.1%) and in informal markets (92%) are most likely to lack access. Comparatively 30% of workers in formal fixed markets have access.
- **Over half (56.9%) of survey respondents report not having access to toilets at their workplace.** Mobile vendors are more likely to have access, likely due to their mobile nature, and those working in informal markets are least likely to have access. Of those who did have access, just 60% are able to access free toilets, while 40% have to pay for toilet use. Of those who have access to facilities, just 32.9% report that gender-separated toilets are available.
- **Most of the workforce (72.2%) also report having no access to storage for their goods.** Women, mobile and informal market workers are most likely to lack access.

Physical & Mental Health Challenges

Vendors face major physical health challenges from their work with reported conditions including – heart conditions, skin cancers, high blood pressure, and musculoskeletal and back problems due to walking long distances, carrying heavy loads or running from police. These issues are a particular challenge for the high numbers of older workers in the industry. Vendors also report experiencing kidney issues due to a lack of access to sanitation facilities. Inadequate access to public healthcare and the high costs of medicines mean that workers are unable to treat problems, and the high cost of food means many cannot afford nutritious food.

Vendors with HIV are often pushed into working in the informal economy due to stigmatisation in formal sectors of the economy.

Mental health challenges – including stress, depression and anxiety - are also frequently identified amongst the workforce. These challenges are exacerbated due to financial insecurity and public hostility towards vendors. Substance abuse also appears to be a major problem. Some vendors turn to drugs or alcohol due to stress or poor living conditions, and there is a lack of support available for those affected.

"I felt strong when I was young, but with time your body makes you pay."

"You argue, talk with people all day, you have to always be cheerful. You have to put up with everything."
– Vendor, West

Mistreatment of vendors

Vendors are often accused of being 'mafia' or 'criminals' and their legitimacy as real workers is questioned. The public, police, and the government fail to recognise the important contribution that vendors make to the national economy.

Conflicts exist with local neighbourhood groups who actively organise against vendors to remove them from particular areas. There are also tensions between vendors working in the popular economy and formal traders, with vendors seen as a major threat to bigger business.

Several vendors highlight the class-based nature of the negative treatment against vendors and disputes over the use of public space. Vendors working in poorer areas are treated differently by the government compared to those working in richer areas of the city. In some (richer) areas of Buenos Aires tables in the street are considered appropriate and sanctioned, but in poorer areas they are seen as 'dirtying' the public space and need to be cleaned away.

"Selling isn't a crime, it's a right."
– Vendor, CABA

"They treat us like gangster…there are no spaces for discussion."
- Female vendor

"Now I'm tired. Age also affects us. We want our status to be regularized so we have a right, because working is a right. There are older people who want to work."
– Vendor, CABA

"The policies that are in place end up causing people to take it out on salespeople or workers for something that has nothing to do with them."

"Who are they trying to attack? Because if you go to San Telmo, Palermo, the bars take up the entire street with their tables. It doesn't bother them there."

"Many fixed stall vendors don't accept the manteros due to discrimination."

There are also internal conflicts between vendors based on existing power hierarchies in the economy. Those working in formal fixed stalls selling artisan goods sometimes discriminate against informal economy vendors due to them not paying fees. Internal power struggles and the highly competitive and oversaturated nature of the industry is a barrier to unity and solidarity amongst the workforce.

Repression, Eviction & Goods Confiscation

Vendors face high levels of surveillance and monitoring from authorities, as well as threatening behaviours and frequent undocumented police searches. There is a perception amongst the workforce that police are not interested in dealing with proper issues or address underlying problems, and instead focus their efforts on harassing and repressing vendors.

Vendors report suffering from harassment in markets from the city government who try to remove them or restrict where they can set up stalls.

"There is institutional violence by the government against street vendors."

"There are police specifically to target vendors" – Vendor, West

Evictions of vendors from public spaces by police are commonplace, and often politically motivated. It was highlighted that evictions appear to be intensified under the current government, and there is little understanding about the broader impact that this has on livelihoods. Police frame vendors as 'mafia' as an excuse to evict them from public spaces. Vendors live in constant fear of being chased, and municipal forces enforce policies harshly. For example, in 'Once' a strong police operation has been in place to stop vendors from operating, with authorities frequently trying to clear people from the street.

"They talk a lot about the mafia so they can evict us from where we are. It's a weapon they have to implement this rejection of people who sell on the street."

"Those at the top don't know that in this culture (we) are always going to be there, always going to have to pay for things, the children." – Vendor, CABA

When evicted from spaces, vendors might be fined and are often moved (or forced to move) into an area with many other vendors. This leads to overcrowding and frequent conflicts between vendors. It also has detrimental impacts on hygiene and safety. Sometimes vendors are given no alternative space in which to sell, or relocated to spaces with little customer traffic – limiting their opportunity to earn an income. These evictions or relocations often take place without proper documentation. Specific laws are often used to create conditions under which vendors can be evicted - such as laws related to fake goods [33]. Complaints from local neighbourhood groups or businesses are sometimes used as justification for eviction.

"There are many of us, and we're stimulating the economy, even if it bothers the government. Many things are falling apart; sales plummet when the street vendors are removed. When people stopped going to Once, they went to Flores because the street vendors were there."
– Vendor CABA

When vendors are found to be operating without proper authorisation, authorised inspectors or police are meant to provide an 'acta de constatación o de comprobación' – an official written record / document setting out the inspection and observed infractions, which might also include measures for the confiscation of merchandise or administrative fines. However, vendors report goods frequently being confiscated without proper warrants, documentation, or legal process.

Merchandise is often not returned to vendors after seizures and some have reported losing millions of pesos in stock, and left with significant debts as a result.

"It's robbery, they confiscate everything…they invent the paperwork"
– Vendor, Lomas de Zamora

"It's unheard of because they raid the same place they give you. I'm claiming my things, I have a report, but I haven't recovered anything. They robbed us, and on top of that, they won't let us work. If they see us with a bag or backpack, they'll kick us out." – Vendor, CABA

"They take my stuff…they came in, took clothes and merchandise. There was no search warrant. I loss 6 million pesos. I'm left with a debt of 850,000 pesos to a fellow street vendor. I do not have that money."

"A colleague lost 20 million pesos in merchandise"
– Female Vendor

ISSUE IN FOCUS

- **27% of respondents have had their goods confiscated.** Vendors operating in public spaces and mobile are most at risk and experience the highest rates of confiscation. Formal fixed market vendors tend to be least affected.
- **Fewer than half (43%) of those whose goods had been confiscated have been issued a formal written notice ('Acta').** There appears to be frequent absence of due process and a high prevalence of abusive enforcement practices.
- **Only 10.7% of those whose goods had been confiscated were able to get them back.** Nearly 9 in 10 vendors permanently lost their merchandise, suggesting confiscation often results in permanent loss of assets.

Because vendors are marginalised and criminalised, they often have little recourse for justice and feel powerless. This leaves vendors in fear of police. They often use WhatsApp to notify one another about raids taking place nearby. One example was highlighted of a vendor who was hit by a bus and died after running away from the police to avoid her merchandise being taken.

"We are the most vulnerable sector and the easiest to attack. We are defenceless."
– Vendor, West

"If you take merchandise away from these people, you take everything away from them, not just a plate of food for their families, but everything, their ability to generate an income and bring bread to their homes."

Vendors also report high levels of insecurity and robbery on the streets. Some vendors report feeling fearful of going out to sell, which is exacerbated by the failure of the police to properly deal with crime and instead criminalise vendors for their work.

"Workers suffer violence from the police, state and other workers, and also face violence from the public – they are treated as dirty and lesser than. Politicians say they make spaces less desirable."
- Vendor and MTE Activist

ISSUE IN FOCUS

- **Around one-third (37.7%) of vendors report experiencing violence and harassment at work. Women are more affected than men – 40.9% of women report experiencing violence and harassment compared to 31.5% of men.**

- **Verbal violence and harassment is the most reported form of violence and harassment - experienced by 55.9% of those affected.** Smaller numbers of workers report physical violence (22.7%) and psychological violence (17.7%). Overall, sexual violence and harassment are less frequently reported, however gender disparities are notable – women are 3.5 times more likely to experience it compared to men. Mobile vendors report the highest frequency of verbal violence and harassment.

- **There are a range of perpetrators, although police are the most common perpetrator – making up 36.1% of responses.** Violence and harassment is also perpetrated by government agents/local authorities/inspectors – reported by 23% of respondents, other vendors (22.2%) and clients/customers (13.9%). Women are more likely than men to experience violence and harassment from other vendors, while men are more likely to report violence and harassment from state actors.

Recognition & Access to Space

Most vendors lack a fixed and protected space from which to work. This leads to daily disputes over spaces, particularly in high traffic areas. Overcrowding in popular areas intensifies tensions between vendors over space allocation.

Vendors also face significant challenges in obtaining legal recognition and securing a stable place to work, limiting their ability to operate safely and exposing them to ongoing risks of displacement. Most vendors operate without official work permits or legal recognition. Bureaucratic hurdles and complicated procedures make it difficult to obtain or renew permits. In many cases, authorities do not issue or actively renew permits. The government is perceived as unsupportive or openly hostile towards vendors and lacking political will to regulate, support or integrate formal markets. This legal insecurity fuels constant fear of being harassed, evicted or facing fines.

Economic Insecurity

Many workers turn to vending due to a loss of or lack of jobs in the formal economy, however most vendors report extremely low or unstable earnings and are in precarious financial positions, often relying on support from community organisations. The cost of living has risen and sales have gone down as a result. Rising prices reduces capacity to restock merchandise. High levels of competition forces vendors to lower prices below value. Many vendors are now trying to diversify by moving to use digital platforms and social media to reach customers.

Economic insecurity differs depending on the location and level of formality of the market – with evictions and goods confiscations less likely in markets where informal or formal agreements with local authorities exist. Financial insecurities are exacerbated due to frequent evictions or goods confiscations – workers feel that they have to constantly start afresh. Economic insecurity forces people to take out loans to survive, and some have high levels of debt.

"Thank God, we have a soup kitchen that's supported us since the day they kicked me out, so neither my son nor I have to starve. We street vendors aren't part of the mafia; we're just workers." – Vendor, CABA

The current political context is also frequently highlighted as a major contributing factor to economic insecurity. These challenges are exacerbated because vendors lack purchasing power and often cannot purchase goods in bulk, or face unstable prices.

"People lend you money to pay for things. I have a debt of 6 million."
– Female vendor

"I've seen many Presidents and many economic crises, but never one this bad."

"There's no price stability, you sold them and it turns out they suddenly went up."

Challenging economic conditions, and high (and growing) numbers of vendors results in greater competition for customers, making it more difficult for vendors to survive and contributing to internal conflicts and clashes – often between older vendors and new workers entering the economy. Challenges are partly driven by a lack of internal organisation amongst vendors. A lack of unified voice prevents them from effectively negotiating for better conditions or rights.

"The other day there was an argument because a man was selling a dozen socks for 4000 and another was selling them for 5000."
– Female Vendor

"The space is too small and sales have dropped – I think they've fallen by 30-40%."
– Vendor, West

"There are problems due to the dispute over the space."

Engagement with Authorities

There is a lack of meaningful consultation or dialogue with local governments, and requests for regularisation are frequently ignored. Vendors are frequently excluded from decision making about public space use.

Many are frustrated with the lack of targeted support measures from authorities and there is an overall perception that municipalities do nothing to assist vendors, and simply create obstacles to make their life more difficult. There are also reported problems with corruption and clientelism in municipalities with spaces granted through favouritism.

Social Protection

Overall, vendors face severe gaps in access to social protection. Without a safety net or recourse, they are left in a highly vulnerable situation, exacerbated by an unstable income, limiting their capacity to plan for the future and reinforcing the cycle of precarity.

TABLE 28: ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION	#	%
Health insurance	**58**	**14.1%**
Pension	**46**	**11.1%**
Disability	**11**	**2.7%**
Other	**11**	**2.7%**
Funeral Coverage	**4**	**1%**
Family care	**4**	**1%**
ART	**3**	**0.7%**

ISSUE IN FOCUS

Access to social protection is low. Where it is available, most support comes from the public sector or informal community arrangements:

- **Health insurance:** Only 14.1% have access to any form of health coverage. Of these workers, 70.7% receive it through government programmes.
- **Pension:** Just 11.1% report having access, predominantly state provided.
- **Disability Support:** 2.7% have access, almost entirely provided by the government.
- **Funeral coverage:** Only 1% of workers have any form of funeral insurance, provided by informal community arrangements and government programmes.
- **Family Care:** Only 0.7% have access, and it is largely provided by the private sector (75%).
- **Occupational Risk Insurance (ART - Aseguradora de Riesgos del Trabajo) [34]:** Access was reported by just 0.7%.

Other types of support identified included Asignación Universal por Hijo (AUH) – a government child allowance for low-income families, Potenciar Trabajo – a state subsidy for workers in the popular economy – and Progresar – a subsidy for students.

In Argentina, the ‘Social Monotributo’ is a simplified tax and social security scheme designed for informal and low-income workers, allowing them to make contributions in order to access basic healthcare and social security. Previously the state (Ministry of Human Capital) subsidized a majority of the costs, particularly for health and pension contributions, making the scheme more accessible. However, under recent reforms workers are now required to cover 50% of the total social security contributions themselves. This shift has transferred a significant financial burden onto informal economy vendors, forcing many out of the system and cutting of access to key social protections. As a result, within weeks of the reform, 406,000 workers had dropped out of the system.[35]

With limited access to state-backed support, vendors often rely on informal community-based safety nets to survive in crisis periods.

“At the national level, we had nothing; support comes from among ourselves. When a friend dies, we hold collections to pay for the burial. Healthcare in Argentina has its shortcomings.”
– Vendor and UTEP Leader

WOMEN

Women are overrepresented amongst the vending population. Women – particularly single mothers – often turn to street vending due to the lack of an alternative option for formal employment. The absence of affordable childcare services further restricts them from pursuing formal work opportunities.

- Street vending exposes women to unequal treatment, with reports of widespread machismo, gender-based violence and unequal treatment. Violence and harassment are common in public spaces, particularly during early or late hours in isolated areas, and safety is a major concern for women working in the street. There are reports of gender-based violence from fellow vendors, customers and authorities, physical and verbal abuse, intimidation, theft of merchandise, and targeted violence from male members of the police. Women report feeling vulnerable during evictions or confrontations with authorities and face greater difficulty in defending territory in male-dominated spaces. Some women also report facing domestic violence.
- A lack of basic infrastructure creates daily challenges. Lack of access to clean, safe public bathrooms increases exposure to violence and harassment and affects women due to their biological needs. Menstrual management is often an unspoken challenge, but a lack of clean, safe restrooms exposes women to health issues, including infections.
- Women also report major health challenges. Long hours of standing leads to varicose veins, joint pain and physical exhaustion. Women report suffering from anxiety, depression and high blood pressure because of financial stress, social stigma of working in the economy, and juggling multiple roles. Many feel socially isolated, as their work schedule and economic situation prevent them from forming social connections. Some women also report difficulty with maintaining stable family relationships due to the emotional and financial strain of their work.
- Women have to balance vending with caregiving and household responsibilities. Many women are single mothers or sole providers. Inadequate childcare assistance and high school fees forces some women to bring children to work. Cuts to government programmes exacerbate the problem. Many women feel they are unable to properly care for their children due to long working hours, low earnings, growing debt, and rising costs – a challenge particularly faced by single mothers and heads of households. Low earnings force women to cut back on purchasing essential food items, impacting children's nutrition.
- Women face systemic barriers to improve or formalize their work, and perceive greater difficulty in accessing permits, credit or government support. They tend to be discouraged from formalising their work, and their voices are excluded from policy spaces.

Despite these challenges, women vendors report a sense of purpose in their work and emotional relief from working in the economy. Many have a deep attachment to their work and see it as a form of personal identity, and have also found empowerment and have been able to escape situations of domestic violence through greater economic independence. Connections with other female vendors has enabled many to build a community that provides emotional support and practical assistance.

“You go out with your bag at five in the morning and you don’t know if you are going to get robbed or not.”

“Our main obstacle is the lack of access to a bathroom. We cannot go during three or four hours of work.”

“You’re treated badly by men in the street.”

"The street vendor doesn't have fixed hours, and you have to try to organize them with the children."

“The economy hits us harder because we raise children alone.”

“When my children went to Paraguay, my sales improved and on top of all my expenses, I have to save money to go and see them.”

“We don’t have a bathroom either. We have to pay for the chemical toilets. We endure rain, cold and difficult conditions.”

“We have to keep in mind that our children are growing up and need healthy food. If I keep them on mate cocido and bread, I can’t expect them to be healthy children.”

“Male vendors get more respect.”

“It’s hard to work and earn money as a single mother.”

“I can’t have my children with me because of my job. I couldn’t find a school with seats, and I couldn’t have them with me on the streets. I had problems due to domestic violence... that’s when I started making my blankets.”

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities report facing significant problems when working in the sector.

- The biggest reported challenge is the widespread social stigma, institutional discrimination and systemic exclusion faced by persons with disabilities. This limits access to formal economy work and leaves many reliant on informal vending. Persons with disabilities are viewed as less capable or might be excluded entirely from work. The state often ignores or is unaware of their needs. As a result, limited adjustments are made for persons with disabilities, which makes it significantly harder for them to access assistance or formalisation procedures.
- Reports also highlight mistreatment by police, inspectors and public authorities. Persons with disabilities might be harassed, ignored or even humiliated.
- The physically demanding nature of vending work, coupled with inaccessible infrastructure poses significant barriers in having independent and safe movement when selling. Streets, markets and public spaces tend to lack ramps, adapted pavements or accessible ground / terrain, leaving some facing difficulties. Markets (and public spaces) also tend to lack accessible, clean and safe bathroom facilities adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Health issues further limit ability to work. Chronic conditions and disabilities make physical labour difficult or unsustainable. Many are unable to afford medication or access regular healthcare due to economic insecurity.

"The market is not adapted to their needs."

"They're exposed to everything and supported by no one."

"The police humiliate and discriminate against them."

"They are treated like they don't exist."

"The police give them no special treatment, sometimes worse."

"Streets and commercial spaces are not suitable for people with disabilities to move around." – UTEP Leader

"There are no ramps on the streets."

MIGRANT WORKERS

There are many migrants working as vendors in Buenos Aires. Some arrive wanting formal economy work, but a lack of opportunities pushed them into informal vending. Some previously worked in the formal economy but found it too exploitative and so decided to instead work selling in the street.

- Many live and work without documentation. This leaves them living in fear and feeling insecure, whilst also facing exploitation and mistreatment from police.
- Many migrants report experiencing discrimination due to their race and unequal treatment in comparison to Argentine workers. This mistreatment comes both from the police and anti-migrant sentiment amongst the public.
- Migrant workers also report greater barriers in accessing community support and face major language barriers when arriving in Buenos Aires.

“I think working for a boss is enslaving, especially when you're a migrant. When I came, there weren't any easy ways to get papers; I had to pay my meagre wages in dollars. To have papers, you had to have a child or marry an Argentinian. I was a street vendor; now I'm a street vendor in Plaza San Martín and online.”

“They took advantage of us because we were immigrants.”

“You used to be able to earn well once you had papers. Now, you pay rent and food – and that’s it.”

“I ended up on the street because I wasn’t going to work for anyone else.”

“I eventually said, enough! And started working independently. I am a single mum.”

“I couldn’t wait. I came here to help my family.”

“We’ve always been seen as a threat – like we want to take their jobs.”

“Argentina is a country of immigrants, but people are forgetting that“

“I had to be a cook, a security guard, a secretary, a thousand jobs...treats his own countrymen like this, we are treated like dogs.”

“Some immigrants commit crimes, and we all get put in the same bag.”

At first, there was a bit of discrimination for being a migrant, but then we all got along. When I wanted to go sell somewhere, they'd tell me: Chilean, go sell somewhere else. Over the years, I've calmed down. When the streets open up for selling, I go out. I met a lot of people. The streets have a social aspect where you can talk to everyone.”

YOUNG PEOPLE

A growing number of young people are entering the informal vending economy. There are many driving factors pushing young people into this type of work. There are a lack of good quality, formal employment opportunities – even for those with higher education levels. Many young people lack experience or education required by employers. Education is perceived as inaccessible, unaffordable or not useful for the jobs young people enter.

- **Some young people experiencing economic insecurity in the home face pressure to contribute to the house-hold income and drop out of school to take up work and support families.**
- **There is a concern that the exclusion of youth from formal employment opportunities and their economic exclusion is pushing them into risky environments**, including criminal activities and the abuse of substances. A lack of social support exacerbates the problem.
- **Young people face discrimination and harassment as a result of their young age**. They are frequently perceived as inexperienced, untrustworthy, or even criminal simply because of their age or appearance. Police harassment and abuse of young people is reportedly a major problem, particularly for those who are poor or working informally. Young people tend to be monitored or moved on by authorities. Some fairs or informal market organisers refuse to accept younger vendors due to distrust. This leaves young people in a cycle of exclusion.

"We're going to start seeing more and more young people working on the streets and more school dropouts having to help out at home."

FORMALISATION: PROGRESS & BARRIERS

Buenos Aires has a mixture of formal and informal vending spaces. Some markets are fully formalised (such as San Telmo), which are recognised and jointly managed by a vendors' association and the city government. There are some positive examples of progress that have been made to recognise and provide informal economy workers with rights and space to work, often resulting from the advocacy of vendors movements:

- *Santa Marta:* a market which originally emerged during the pandemic as an informal gathering of clothing and footwear vendors – has since evolved into a fully organised market. Persistent advocacy by local workers and community members demanding formal recognition and protection of their right to work resulted in the allocation of a space and the establishment of negotiated permits. Today, the market operates with the support and coordination of the Ministry of Education.

- *Moreno municipality:* vendors operate under a structured system regulated by a policy for the popular economy. Workers are issued official municipal permits upon paying a fee which grants them the right to sell without fear or having merchandise confiscated. This has reduced police harassment and enabled more open, constructive dialogue between vendors and authorities.

- *San Martin:* now a fixed fair with an informal agreement with the municipality.

In some cases, vendors operate based on informal verbal agreements established with local authorities from the previous administration. While these arrangements provide benefits, they leave vendors vulnerable to changes resulting from shifting political environments.

Overall, the majority of vendors continue to operating in informal arrangements.

The vast majority (92.5%) of respondents report that they have not received any assistance to formalise their business. Of those who have received assistance for formalisation, around half (44.8%) had registered businesses – indicating that where support is available, vendors are more likely to access formal registration.

TABLE 29: BARRIERS TO FORMALISATION	#	%
Lack of capital and financial constraints	**157**	**46.6%**
Cost and complexity of regulatory processes	**75**	**22.3%**
Corruption, harassment or lack of trust in authorities	**44**	**13.1%**
Perceived lack of benefits or motivation to formalize	**40**	**11.9%**
Lack of information, knowledge or awareness	**21**	**6.2%**
TOTAL	337	100%

Financial constraints emerged as the most frequently cited barrier to formalising vending businesses – making up 46.6% of all reported barriers. High costs associated with formalisation fail to accommodate for the economically insecure nature of many vendors who have to deal with unaffordable payments for workplaces or stalls, and low earnings that make it difficult to cover the expenses associated with formalisation. Many vendors lack the capital needed to invest in their business. These challenges are further exacerbated by high levels of inflation.

"There are people who don't even have enough to pay a single tax."
– Vendor, Lomas de Zamora

"Today, the cost of renting a stall is very high and sales are weak – you can only cover rent."

"Because of lack of economic resources, access to space is impossible."

"I would like to formalise, but it's too expensive"

Bureaucratic obstacles and complex processes are also commonly cited as major barriers to formalisation. Major reported challenges included complex and unclear paperwork, long waiting times for permit approvals and excessive legal requirements and administrative procedures. Some vendors lack time to complete complex procedures, often due to domestic responsibilities. Vendors also cite requirements for specific documentation that some cannot provide, such as proof of residency due to homelessness or informal / unstable living arrangements, or residency status due to unstable immigration status.

Some vendors have attempted to formalise but have been denied permits or registrations, often without clear reasoning. Where formal markets do exist, vendors report that they are being shut down or are simply inaccessible.

"For the permit there are just too many requirements"

"you can't open a business because you can't meet all the requirements. Where do 40-50 years old's get jobs?" – Vendor, West

"Main barriers are municipal prohibitions on street vending."

Many vendors lack trust in authorities and so do not attempt to access formalisation processes. Rather than protection and support, vendors' frequently experience harassment, repression, intimidation from police or authorities. This hostile approach creates a climate of fear and insecurity, discouraging efforts toward formalisation. A lack of inclusive institutional initiatives has created a perception that the government is indifferent to or lacks the political will or interest to support the sector to formalise. In some cases, vendors perceive authorities as actively obstructing efforts to formalise or improve their working conditions.

"The city government is against street vendors…it does not want to help."

"Classism – government does not want poor people in the streets."

"There is no political interest in the poor."

Vendors' work goes unrecognised – both legally and socially – and is dismissed as illegal or 'not real work.' This is echoed in legal frameworks, with the absence of labour protections and rights. This contributes to social stigma from the public and creates a cycle of invisibility and exclusion of vendors from opportunities to formalise.

Many vendors lack motivation or perceive a lack of benefits that hinder or discourage them from accessing formalisation. There is a perception that formalisation is not worth the effort, particularly for vendors who view the work as temporary or as a short-term solution. Oversaturation of selling spaces – where too many vendors already operate in the same area – make formalisation seem impractical. There is also a perception that informal economy work is simpler, more flexible, and provides greater autonomy.

"This is just a temporary situation, I don't want to invest."

A significant number of vendors are held back by a lack of clear information, guidance and institutional support for formalisation. Many vendors remain confused or lack information about what is required, and have received limited government communication or outreach.

In addition, **90.1% of respondents also report that they have not participated in any consultations with authorities or government about their working conditions.** Stakeholder interviews reveal that there are a lack of mechanisms for consultation between the state and worker organisations. [36] There are also significant disparities in opportunities for negotiation between Buenos Aires and other parts of Argentina - in Buenos Aires negotiation spaces appear to be limited, whereas some provincial contexts appear more receptive and provide opportunities for dialogue and space to formalise:

In Jujuy – a northwest province - an ordinance was introduced in 2016 whereby workers' pay a contribution for the right to work in public spaces. Workers are classified by sector and zone, helping to maintain records and order. There are opportunities for workers to negotiate if permits are denied: "In 2016, we began working on a draft ordinance that underwent some modifications; it had to be organized by sector, categories, and zones. You pay a fee to engage in street vending, and when there are large events, you can participate by paying for a permit."
– UTEP Leader

The overall fragmentation between national, provincial and municipal governments, lack of centralised coordination for negotiation, and the national governments' unwillingness to engage mean that much of UTEP's focus has been at the provincial rather than national level.

"At the national level, there is no dialogue; what we learn about what the national government is going to do is through social media or the official gazette."
– UTEP Leader

"We already know that the national government is not going to give us any attention, and that's why these objectives are presented to the local/municipal authorities."

"We have gone to the provincial government to ask that the policies we had advanced at the national level be taken up by the province. And where we have dialogue, we move forward with local authorities." – **UTEP Leader**

There are also limited programmes and policies that support vendors in the informal economy. 54.7% of respondents are unaware of public policies or programmes supporting vendors. 38.8% identified some general support measures but could not name specific initiatives, and just 6.5% of respondents were able to identify particular programmes.

Over recent years, several programmes have been developed targeting workers within the informal economy, often with significant involvement or advocacy of organisations of informal economy workers.

However, under the current government many of these programmes have been cut or are under threat:

- *Registro Nacional de la Economía Popular (ReNaTEP)* created in 2020 - an official registry, managed by the Ministry of Development to recognise workers in the informal economy as legitimate economic actors and facilitate access to rights and benefits. UTEP played a key role in the creation and implementation of the register. However, only 2.8 million of the 5 million popular economy workers in Argentina are registered. [37]
- *Acompañar Programme* - a national support programme providing financial assistance to women facing gender-based violence, including a monthly stipend and access to psychosocial services. Over the past year it has faced major budget cuts.
- *Socio-Urban Integration Law* passed in 2016 – a major achievement of UTEP and other movements - aiming to improve living conditions in informal settlements and popular neighbourhoods by funding basic infrastructure and housing upgrades, with provisions for a Housing Certificate and for women (often heads of households) prioritised to have a certificate in their own name. Funding has now been cut.
- *Salario Social Complementario* – a programme created following pressure from social movements to support informal economy workers by providing a social wage – equal to 50% of the national minimum wage - to the most excluded and vulnerable workers. Over time it became 'Potenciar Trabajo' - losing the original purpose of recognising the value of informal economy work and becoming a basic social assistance programme to push people back into work – even though most had never stopped working. Under the current government, the programme is being dismantled – the social wage has been reduced, support structures have been cut and the government is stepping back from guaranteeing protections for informal economy workers.
- *Nexo and Plus Socio-Comunitario* – state funded programmes designed to financially support people engaged in social and community work, recognising the value of unpaid or underpaid labour. Both are being dismantled under the current administration. [38]
- Historically the government has provided supplies to community kitchens, but the current government has largely suspended this and has withheld supplies purchased under the previous administration – despite a judge ordering the government to distribute it. [39]

"We have won more than eight lawsuits regarding food delivery, but these people don't care. They raid dining halls very quickly, but we have eight rulings in our favour and not a single kilo of rice arrives."

"We have fellow street vendors who set up soup kitchens or snack bars in their homes, and they are responsible for keeping them going. When the government stopped providing food, they began collecting donations or organizing activities to generate income so they could continue running the soup kitchen. They also sought help from Caritas to access food."
– Vendor and UTEP Leader

In Buenos Aires, the Defensoría del Pueblo de la Ciudad is an independent organisation that vendors can approach to address grievances related to public space enforcement, rights abuse or policing. This has proven to be a useful tool to enable vendors to access forms of justice, however it faces major challenges due to insufficient resources to effectively address all of the grievances raised.

"I'm retired, I still work. The public space had given us the playground so we could spread a banner. From one day to the next, without warning, they evicted the 345 of us. We went to the Ombudsman's Office, and they assigned us a lawyer who later withdrew from the case."
– Retired Vendor, still working

Stakeholder interviews revealed that business associations have also historically worked with the local government to provide training to vendors, including entrepreneurship training.

With the rollback of supportive policies and programmes, most of the support available for vendors comes from social or community organisations from within the informal economy itself.

UTEP also plays a central role in advocating for laws and policies that support the popular economy and those working in it, and frequently organises or collaborates in mass mobilisations and protests, Since Milei took office, protests have intensified in response to austerity measures and cuts.

WORKFORCE PROPOSALS

Results from surveys, interviews and focus groups revealed proposals to address challenges and improve the industry (see represented in the table and below).

TABLE 30: WORKFORCE PROPOSALS	#	%
Legal recognition and formalization	**121**	**30.6%**
Provision of adequate markets and fixed spaces	**96**	**24.3%**
Provision/improvement of infrastructure, basic services, and working conditions	**58**	**14.7%**
Organization of the fair/among vendors	**43**	**10.9%**
Other (dialogue with the government; change of authorities; economic improvement; demonstrations)	**35**	**8.9%**
Protection from harassment/violence by government authorities and/or police	**27**	**6.8%**
Job training, business knowledge	**12**	**3%**
Access to financial support and loans	**3**	**0.8%**
Total	**395**	**100%**

***The* most common proposal from vendors is a broad demand for legal recognition and formalisation** – making up 30.6% of all proposals made by vendors. Vendors want greater stability, protection and dignity in their work, reflecting a broader need for more fair treatment, greater security and recognition for their work.

Some highlighted a general desire for **access to formal, stable jobs** – with contracts - that provide flexible hours and a reliable and stable income: *"A fixed job, a registered contract."*

However, most demands for formalization centre around the need for **stable and fixed permits for vendors to be able to work legally and without fear of harassment, evictions or repression.** Vendors call for easy access to legal permits to sell in public spaces or market spaces, with affordable fees and taxes which are standardised across the sector.

"Obtain a permit to work and have a fixed stall."

"I am willing to pay to be able to work peacefully."

There are calls for this to be paired with a full recognition of the value and contribution of vendors' work and legal recognition of their status as workers – to be paired with access to workers' rights. Such a recognition would enable their inclusion in social and economic policies, encourage greater respect for vendors, and provide greater opportunities for vendors to engage with authorities to improve their working conditions.

"That they recognize my craft to be able to work in different places."

"Don't forget the people at the fairs. We are important for the economy."

There are also strong demands for improvements to infrastructure, market spaces and services. Vendors highlight an urgent need for better infrastructure in fairs and market places - fixed stalls with proper infrastructure – shelter to protect from weather, lighting, security, access to utilities (electricity, water), and storage for goods. Markets and public spaces need greater provision of basic sanitation facilities, and water access to improve hygiene. Many vendors in public spaces want to move away from working on the ground and so call for greater opportunities for access to spaces for fixed or semi-permanent markets or selling areas.

"A fixed place with a roof and electricity."

"A space with bathrooms and security."

"Gazebo or kiosks to organise work."

"A stall with structure because on the floor everything gets dirty."

"Fixed stall with roof, electricity, security, bathroom."

Where markets do exist, **vendors call for better internal organisation of markets, opportunities to grow existing markets to broaden the customer base**, and measures to **allow existing markets to operate more frequently** – longer operation hours, or greater numbers of operating days.

"Bigger spaces, more working days in tourist areas."

"I would like to sell more, to work more hours."

Vendors want the ability to work without fear or harassment, extortion or interruptions from police or government authorities, and call for measures to reduce police harassment and safeguards to address arbitrary evictions and unsanctioned / undocumented goods confiscations.

"Let us work peacefully."

"I want a trial to recover the merchandise stolen by the police."

"That the authorities let us work."

"Work peacefully, control and regulation without violence."

There is a need for greater capacity-building through the development of accessible training and education programmes. This might include training on financial literacy, legal rights, or sales and business skills to enable vendors to improve their business operation.

Inadequate access to social protection highlights a need for improving access to social protection programmes and re-funding programmes that have been cut by the government. Vendors also call for support for housing improvements, minimum wage guarantees and the provision of a universal basic income, and assistance with paying rent.

These proposals are paired with broader calls for policy changes to improve the economic environment to support small vendors - including measures to reduce inflation to increase sales opportunities and reduce the price of goods – as well as opportunities for **greater access to low-interest credit opportunities to enable vendors to invest to build their business.**

Exclusion from decision-making means that vendors call for **more opportunities for dialogue and negotiation with national and local government** to develop fair regulation and address workplace issues.

Vendors also highlight a need for **greater collective organisation of vendors within representative groups** to enable them to access support and gain rights and recognition.

Conclusions & Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS

Workforce Characteristics

Vendors operate across varied workplaces, although the industry is more dominated by those working in informal fixed markets and in public spaces. Workplace type and gender impacts access to infrastructure, mobility and income. Women are more commonly found in informal fixed markets compared to men who are more commonly found in public spaces and working mobile. Vendors offer a wide range of goods and services, with clothing and footwear being especially common.

For most workers, vending is their primary source of income, although some combine it with other jobs which tend to be precarious and informal (cleaning, childcare, day labour). A few rely on pensions or formal employment as their main income, often supplementing it with income from vending.

Ther are greater numbers of women in the industry, representative of the increasing numbers of women in the informal economy in Argentina. Gender inequalities appear to influence access to vending location, infrastructure and trading opportunities.

The industry includes a wide range of ages, although the majority of vendors are over the age of 40. Older workers more likely to be in formal fixed markets and less likely to be working mobile, compared to young workers.

Workers have varying experience levels. A significant portion of the workforce have been in the sector for many years, reflecting its role as a source of long-term livelihood. Despite this, there are also many newer entrants – many of whom are likely young - joining the sector due to a lack of formal employment opportunities within Buenos Aires. Many vendors are widowed or separated and are single heads of household. A significant portion of vendors report disability-related care needs within the household.

Most vendors live near their place of work, indicating a strong localised vending economy. A significant portion reside in working-class or informal neighbourhoods, with mobile vendors more likely to live in these areas - reflecting their greater economic insecurity. The workforce relies heavily on public and active transport due to affordability constraints and the localised nature of work. **While many workers are from Buenos Aires, there is a strong presence of migrant workers, particularly from neighbouring countries.**

Education levels are mixed, although many have only achieved secondary level education. Technical and job-related training is limited, with men having greater levels of participation in technical or mechanical training and women more involved in training for creative skills. This reflects gender norms and affects opportunities for advancement or diversification in work.

There are generally low levels of worker organisation, although some localized initiatives show that collective action can improve conditions.

Livelihoods & Employment Arrangements

Vendors operate across a wide range of spaces and set-ups. The most common selling arrangement involves selling goods directly from the ground, often displayed on a cloth. This low-cost, accessible method is particularly common amongst women, who are more likely than men to sell without fixed or semi-permanent infrastructure. In contrast, men are more likely to use carts, tables or open-air stands, reflecting gendered dynamics in access to space, and resources. Vendors selling from the ground have greater exposure to weather, enforcement actions and higher levels of insecurity.

For most workers – except those in formal fixed markets – there is no regular payment for their trading space. However, when payments are made, they vary in amount and recipient. Municipal governments are the most common recipients, but in some cases fees are paid to stall owners or intermediaries underscoring the fragmented and often informal nature of market governance.

Access to trading space is governed by a mix of state and non-state actors, creating an inconsistent regulatory environment. Most vendors operate outside formal legal frameworks, despite many engaging in practices like paying informal fees or obtaining temporary permits. Regulatory mechanisms – where they do exist – are often unclear or applied unevenly, particularly affecting mobile vendors and those working in public spaces, who face frequent harassment or evictions.

The majority of vendors lack legal registration or municipal permits. Where registration exists, it takes various forms – from official municipal licenses to unofficial or precarious permits. The blurred and fragmented nature of registration and trading space payments increases vendors' vulnerability to exploitation, particularly by authorities or intermediaries who might demand informal payments or bribes.

Vending is the main source of income for most, yet earnings are generally low and unstable. Income is highly variable and can depend on market type, location, seasonality and competition. Gross and net earnings often fall well below the national minimum wage and are insufficient to meet basic living costs – particularly in the context of rising inflation and a volatile political environment. A major driver of this financial insecurity is a limited opportunity to sell, as many vendors can only trade during specific hours or days. This restricts earning potential and creates high competition for customers and trading spots, contributing to tension between vendors.

Expenses further deplete earnings. The largest costs are related to purchasing goods and supplies, with additional smaller payments for transport, informal space, fees, or fines. Mobile vendors, in particular, report high payments to police or local enforcers. **Few vendors have access to formal loans or credit.** Where loans are taken, they are typically used for purchasing stock, tools or repaying existing debts and sourced from informal economy vendors, digital finance app or family and friends.

The vast majority of vendors are own-account workers operating without formal employment protections. Most also support dependents, adding pressure to already fragile livelihoods.

BENCHMARK **Overall, vendors lack decent employment conditions.**

Working hours are highly uneven. Most work regular hours, however there are differences in working time – some work more typical working hours (under 8 hours per day) while others work very long weeks - including 7-day working weeks without rest. Hours are often tied to market operating times. Workers either have to work long hours to make ends meet or working time is insufficient to earn a proper income. Public space vendors face the longest and most irregular hours, while vendors in formal fixed markets tend to enjoy more regular and predictable work schedules. Place of work and work set-up shapes access to and stability of working time.

Poor infrastructure is a defining feature of the vending environment. Many vendors operate without access to adequate market spaces, storage, electricity, or even basic sanitation. Less than half report access to toilets, and even fewer to gender-separated facilities. The lack of sanitation poses serious challenges, particularly for women who have to manage menstrual hygiene in public or unsafe settings.

Health risks are pervasive and unaddressed. Vendors face a high burden of physical chronic conditions and occupational injuries resulting from long hours spent standing or walking, heavy lifting and carrying goods, exposure to sun and weather, and lack of access to sanitation. Mental health concerns are also widespread, including anxiety, depression, chronic stress, and in some cases, substance abuse. These challenges are exacerbated by economic insecurity, social hostility and harassment. Despite this, vendors lack access to healthcare due to the high cost of medicines, barriers to accessing public services, and a lack of health insurance.

BENCHMARKS **Access to social protection is extremely limited.**

Most vendors are left without a safety net in times of illness, old age or economic crisis. The decline of government schemes – including the Social Monotributo subsidy which was a key mechanism to include workers in social protection schemes - has further pushed many out of coverage.

BENCHMARKS **Vendors' right to work without restrictions is routinely undermined.**

Vendors frequently face police harassment, confiscation of goods, forced evictions, and verbal and physical abuse, particularly those working without formal permits. Although authorities are meant to issue formal documentation during inspections, this is rarely followed. Goods are often seized and not returned, resulting in significant financial losses. The treatment of vendors as criminals reflects class-based and discriminatory attitudes that further erode their rights.

BENCHMARKS **Workplace violence and harassment are widespread.**

Vendors face different forms of violence and harassment, but women report particularly high levels of exposure, including sexual harassment, verbal abuse and physical intimidation – both from authorities and the public. Many women also experience discrimination in access to trading spaces and protection.

Migrants, who make up a significant portion of the workforce, face compounded challenges – including racism, language barriers and greater vulnerability to police abuse. Many are isolated from support networks and lack access to services and legal protections.

Gendered inequalities are reproduced in the informal economy. Many women are single mothers and heads of households and struggle to balance multiple roles of caregiving and earn a livelihood. A lack of affordable childcare and public services means that many face significant economic and emotional stress.

Formalisation & Social Dialogue

There are some positive examples of progress in the recognition of informal economy vendors and enabling access to rights and space to work. However, overall there are a lack of public policies or political commitment to regularise work in public spaces - contributing to poor working conditions and a tendency for authorities and police to take advantage of vendors' irregular status and evict them from work spaces, violating their right to work.

Over the years, some useful programmes and policies have been developed to support workers in the informal economy. However **under the current government many of these programmes and supportive police are being rolled back or are under significant threat**. This leaves major gaps and means that collective organisations of informal economy vendors develop their own responses and alternatives to address challenges – **vendors build unity, solidarity and strength to confront repressive government policies and jointly develop appropriate solutions.**

BENCHMARKS **Participation in social dialogue is limited and the majority of vendors face barriers in accessing opportunities for formalisation.**

There is no systemic or consistent meaningful dialogue with authorities across national, provincial and municipal levels. There are a lack of mechanisms for consultation or negotiation between the state and worker organisations. There is also fragmentation between provinces. As a result, vendors in Buenos Aires face major barriers in improving their working conditions, being included in policy development, and feel powerless. **The majority of vendors have also not received any assistance or support to formalise their work.**

Experience has shown that regularisation by local authorities can lead to more dignified working conditions and opportunities for registration, but this fails to solve all the challenges being faced in the economy. Context-specific solutions are needed to address the multi-faceted challenges faced by vendors – legal recognition and opportunities for formalisation, alongside addressing the immediate challenges faced by workers – adequate market infrastructure, services and working conditions, greater organisation of market spaces, protection from violence and harassment, access to credit, social protection, opportunities for training and spaces for representative organisations of workers to engage with authorities.

However, crisis contexts in Buenos Aires create uncertainty about living conditions and consequently greater hostility within working environments. **This means that even when activity is recognised and regularised there is a need to strengthen the organisation of vendors and raise awareness of the need for solidarity amongst workers.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2015, the ILO agreed a set of recommendations to governments for the transition towards formalisation - ILO Recommendation 204 on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy:

"[Governments should] take urgent and appropriate measures to enable the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while ensuring the preservation and improvement of existing livelihoods...and respecting workers' fundamental rights, opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship during the transition."[40]

More specifically, R204 gives guidance for governments to:

- Respect the rights of all workers, whether informal or formally employed, to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
- Consult with and promote active participation of representatives of membership-based informal economy workers' organisations in designing and implementing policies and programmes of relevance to the informal economy.
- Take immediate measures to address unsafe and unhealthy working conditions in the informal economy.
- Extend social protection, decent working conditions and a minimum wage to all workers in the informal economy.
- Provide access to affordable quality childcare and other care services in order to promote gender equality in employment opportunities and the transition to the formal economy.
- Promote anti-corruption and good governance.
- Provide regulated access to public space.

Key findings and recommendations from this study can provide insight to support formalisation processes in line with ILO R204 and the principles of decent work. ILO R204 provides a roadmap for a gradual, inclusive transition that protects existing livelihoods.

The informal vending sector in Buenos Aires plays a vital economic and social role yet remains structurally excluded, under-regulated and institutional unsupported. Fragmented and poor governance and support, and limited access to basic infrastructure and social protection means that vendors operate in conditions far from decent work. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated, rights-based and inclusive approach.

ADDRESS IMMEDIATE WORKFORCE NEEDS

Before any broader reforms are introduced, there is a need to tackle the most urgent issues facing workers to improve working lives and conditions. This means:

- Guarantee access to regulated, safe and secure selling spaces, prioritising vulnerable groups (women, migrants, persons with disabilities).
- Invest in essential infrastructure – including sanitation, shelter, storage, electricity and water, particularly in public vending areas.
- Designate and protect official vending zones and stop arbitrary evictions and goods confiscations.
- Implement anti-harassment training and protocols for authorities and police to prevent abuse and ensure vendors' safety.

EXPAND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social protection must be universal, accessible and reflective of the realities of informal economy work. This means the need to reinvest in and expand inclusive schemes including reinstating the Social Monotributo subsidy, the Potenciar Trabajo, Nexo and Plus Sociocomunitario programmes. Social protection policies must be designed for mixed-income households, reflecting the blurred lines between formal and informal employment.

RECOGNITION OF VENDORS & REGISTRATION

Informal economy vendors must be recognised as legitimate workers, making them rightful bearers of legal and social protections, and the economic and social value of their work recognised. This recognition of vendors would reduce conflict, support inclusion and ensure the protection of labour rights.

UTEP calls for the recognition of the popular economy as the 'third pillar' of the Argentine economy – alongside public and private sectors – which would ensure access to social security and labour protections.

Inclusive and transparent registration and permitting system should be created, tailored to the diversity of vendor set-ups. Bureaucratic and cost requirements should be simplified and reduced, and payment / fee structures should be regulated and standardised to prevent exploitation. Integrated governance frameworks need to be created to reduce fragmentation across government bodies.

ACCESS TO CREDIT AND CAPITAL

Financial exclusion remains a major barrier to mobility for informal economy vendors. There is a need to expand access to microcredit and low-interest loan programmes for informal economy vendors. This should be paired with financial literacy training. Gender-responsive financial and training initiatives should also be developed.

TRAINING & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Accessible training programmes should be established targeting the needs and lives of informal economy vendors. This should include measures to encourage women's participation in training programmes.

STRENGTHEN WORKER ORGANISATION

There is a need to better support the formation and strengthening of vendor cooperatives and associations, with legal recognition and financial support. This can help to build platforms for joint advocacy, raising workers' voices in policymaking processes. Solidarity economy models – which promote mutual aid, collective bargaining and shared infrastructure - should also be promoted.

INCLUSIVE PLANNING AND DIALOGUE

Informal economy vendors and their representatives must play a central role in shaping formalisation, labour, and social policies that affect them. Effective policy responses must centre and reflect the needs of the most marginalised groups (women, migrant workers, persons with disabilities).

Institutionalised and formalised forums and mechanisms must be created for regular consultation and negotiation between vendors and their representative organisations, and governments at municipal and national levels. The fundamental labour rights of trade unions of informal economy vendors must be officially recognised and respected and their right to bargaining and negotiation with relevant authorities recognised.

Policy development should be tailored to local needs and based on evidence to inform responsive planning. Real change also requires building trust between authorities and informal economy vendors.

PATHWAY TO FORMALISATION: A JUST AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH

Formalisation processes must balance the needs of vendors to earn a livelihood with the introduction of regulation and avoid evictions, harassment or regressive fiscal policies.

A one-size-fits all approach is inadequate. Formalisation must be incremental, step-by-step and adapted to sectors / regions with tailored support to respect the diversity of vendors. Sector specific interventions might be needed to reflect local contexts and needs. Most importantly, any formalisation must be an ongoing, long-term and transformative process that is grounded in local realities.

End Notes

[1] ILO, n.d., Informal Economy.
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[3] https://www.wiego.org/informal-economy/occupational-groups/street-vendors-and-market-traders/
[4] International Labour Organisation. 2015. R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). ILO Geneva. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R204
[5] See: ILO's Decent Work Agenda. https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/decent-work
[6] BBC, 2024, Have Milei's first six months improved the Argentina economy? https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cm55yv0g0veo
[7] The financial crisis was triggered by mounting public debt accumulated under IMF-backed reforms and a fixed-peso dollar exchange rate.
[8] ITUC, 2018, Argentina – Social Dialogue and the Informal Economy. ITUC. https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/sd_informality_argentina_en.pdf
[9] The Argentina government have defaulted on its sovereign debt 3 times in past two decades.
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https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/jan/12/the-guardian-view-on-argentinas-austerity-year-painful-cuts-rising-poverty-and-a-geopolitical-gamble
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The Guardian, 2025, Argentina's Javier Milei vetoes bills that could have raised pensions and disability benefits. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/aug/04/javier-milei-argentina-pensions-disability-benefits-bills
[13] Ibid.
[14] See: Bloomberg, 2024, Milei's Shock Therapy Ignites 'Brutal' Income Inequality in Argentina. https://www.bloomberg.com./news/articles/2024-07-17/milei-s-shock-therapy-ignites-income-inequality-in-argentina
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https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/poverty-hit-argentines-rummage-food-even-economic-outlook-improves-2025-03-31/
[16] Source: INDEC, 2025, Poverty Line. https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel3-Tema-4-46
18] See: WIEGO, 2025, The Destruction of Social Protection and Inclusive Labour Policies in Argentina. https://www.wiego.org/blog/the-destruction-of-social-protection-and-inclusive-labour-policies-in-argentina/
[19] Source: ILO/ILOSTAT, Informal Employment Rate by Sex (reflects informal employment data from Argentina Permanent Household Survey) https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/
[20] Grabois, Juan, 2015, Organisation and popular economy. Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, CTEP - Asociación Civil de los Trabajadores de la Economía Popular, 2015.
[21] See: https://utep.org.ar/nuestro-sindicato
22] Ibid
[23] UTEP's ideological foundational text 'Work and Organisation in the Popular Economy' (commonly called the 'Blue Book' / 'activists bible') was authored by Juan Grabois who was instrumental in founding MTE and CTEP. Available at: https://utep.org.ar/documentos

[24] Workers / sectors represented by MTE include: Cartoneros y cartoneras (recyclers/waste pickers); textiles/garment workers; rural/agricultural workers; construcción e integración socio urbana (self-managed or cooperative construction workers improving housing, infrastructure, public space); espacios públicos (public space workers and street vendors); liberados, liberadas y familiares (formerly incarcerated people and families); socio comunitario (community and social workers); vientos de libertad (branch focused on addiction and recovery); and women and diversity, health, and education and training. ENOCEP is a school set up by the MTE for training activists from the popular economy. See more at: https://mteargentina.org.ar
UNLP, 2023, El subsuelo de la patria: Historia del Movimiento de Trabajadores Excluidos
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27] Source: ILO/ILO Stat, 2024 Argentina Labour Force Participation Rate: https://rshiny.ilo.org/dataexplorer52/?region=AMERICAS&lang=en&segment=ref_area&id=ARG_M
[28] Source: ILO/ILOSTAT, Informal Employment Rate by Sex (reflects informal employment data from Argentina Permanent Household Survey) https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/
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[31] Source: ILO/ILOSTAT, Argentina, https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/
[32] Even more stark is the gap between these earnings and the anticipated net living wage (for non-metropolitan urban Argentina ARS$717,605. Living wage is 'remuneration to afford a decent standard of living, including food, water, housing, education, health, care, transportation, clothing and other essential needs including provision for unexpected events'
(Global Living Wage Coalition) See: Anker Institute, 2024, Living Wage.
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63e128dff6c16159094155ea/t/67521175a528e77a76c31cba/1733431669561/2024+Update+Report_ARG_+Urban.pdf
[33] Law No. 22.362 prohibits selling counterfeit or fraudulently imitated goods. 'Marcas Truchas' are counterfeit or imitation products bearing logos or branding.
[34] ART: Insurance provision from government to provide coverage for work-related accidents and occupational illnesses. Workers in the informal economy are not automatically covered by ART but can enrol voluntarily under 'Monotributo Social' – self-employed plans.
[35] El Economista, 2025. Monotributo social: el Gobierno dio de baja al 60% de los inscriptos, más de 400.000 personas. https://eleconomista.com.ar/economia/monotributo-social-gobierno-dio-baja-60-inscriptos-mas-400000-personas-n83163
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[39] In May 2024 a National Strike for Food Emergency and actions were taken by social movements and trade unions against closure of community kitchens.
[40] International Labour Organisation. 2015. R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). ILO Geneva. https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R204

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire Survey

Encuesta Buenos Aires ‘Barometer’

Fecha de la entrevista: ________________ Nombre del entrevistador: ________________

Lugar: ______________________________ Nombre Feria _________________________

Hola, soy [nombre] de UTEP. Estamos realizando una investigación sobre las condiciones laborales de los vendedores ambulantes y comerciantes de mercados.

Los resultados de esta investigación se utilizarán para ayudar a UTEP en consultas y negociaciones.

Me gustaría hacerte algunas preguntas. Todo lo que digas será tratado de manera confidencial / anónima.

<u>PARA TODAS LAS PERSONAS</u>

1. Género	Femenino	1
	Masculino	2
	Otro	3

2. Edad	18-24	25-39	> 40	>50	>60
	1	2	3	4	5

3a. Estado civil	Soltero/a	1
	Casado/a	2
	Viudo/a	3
	Divorciado/a Separado/a	4

3b. ¿Vos o alguien de tu familia tiene una discapacidad?	Sí, yo	1
	Sí, alguien de mi familia	2
	No	3

4a. Indica el nivel más alto de educación que hayas completado:	Sin educación formal	1
	Alfabetización básica (sabe leer y escribir)	2
	Educación primaria	3
	Educación secundaria	4

	Educación terciaria / técnica	5
	Educación universitaria	6
4b. Además de tu educación formal, ¿qué capacitación técnica / laboral o calificaciones adicionales has recibido?		

5a. ¿A qué distancia está tu lugar de trabajo de dónde vivís?	0-5 km	1
	6-10 km	2
	11-15 km	3
	16-20 km	4
	21-25 km	5
	Más de 25 km	6
5b. ¿Qué medio de transporte usas para llegar hasta tu lugar de trabajo? *(marcá todas las que correspondan)*	A pie / en bicicleta	1
	Transporte público (colectivo, tren)	2
	Remis	3
	Auto propio o compartido	4
	Otro	5
5c. Vivís en un barrio popular? (RENABAP)	Sí	1
	No	2
5d. La vivienda es:	Alquilada	1
	Propia o cedida	2
	Otro	3
5e. Asistís vos o alguien de tu grupo familiar a una olla popular / comedor / merendero?	No	1
	Sí, ocasionalmente	2
	Sí, todas las semanas	3
	Sí, más de una vez por semana	4

6. Dónde naciste?	Buenos Aires	1	Mendoza	2	Chaco	3
	Catamarca	4	San Luis	5	Chubut	6
	Corrientes	7	Santa Fe	8	Córdoba	9
	Entre Ríos	10	Salta	11	Formosa	12

	Jujuy	13	La Pampa	14	La Rioja	15
	Misiones	16	Neuquén	17	Río Negro	18
	San Juan	19	Santa Cruz	20	Santiago del Estero	21
	Tierra del Fuego AIAS	22	Tucumán	23	Bolivia	24
	Chile	25	Haití	26	Perú	27
	República Dominicana	28	Senegal	29	Uruguay	30
	Venezuela	31	Ghana	32		
	Otro (especificar)	33				

7. Cómo es tu lugar de trabajo?		
Mercado formal fijo	1	
Mercado informal fijo	2	
En la vía pública	3	
Ambulante	4	
Otro *(cuál?)*	5	

8. Cuál es tu principal fuente de ingresos en este momento? *(Elegí una opción)*							
Vendedor	1	Vendedor ambulante	2	Remis / Transporte personas	3	Albañilería / Arreglo de vivienda	4
Arreglo de ropa	5	Limpieza / Trab. Casas particulares	6	Cuidado de adultos /niños	7	Changarín	8
Otro *(¿cuál?)*	9						

9. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas haciendo el trabajo que realizas actualmente?		Años

10a. ¿Cuántos trabajos tienes?		
	1	1
	2-3	2
	Más de 4	3
	No sé	4

10b. Si tienes más de un trabajo, ¿qué más haces? *(Elige todas las opciones que correspondan)*

Vendedor	1	Vendedor ambulante	2	Puestero	3	Remis / Transporte personas	4
Albañilería / Arreglo de vivienda	5	Limpieza / Trab. Casas particulares	6	Cuidado de adultos /niños	7	Changarín	8
Arreglo de ropa	9	Otro *(¿cuál?)*	10				

11. ¿Sus dueño/a o alquilas tu puesto?	Es propio	1
	Alquilo	2
	No aplica	3

SOLO PARA DUEÑOS/AS DE PUESTOS

12. Tenés más de un puesto?	Si	1
	No	2

PARA TODOS/AS

13. ¿Qué bienes o servicios vendes? *(Elige todas las opciones que correspondan)*							
Comida elaborada	1	Bebidas	2	Kiosco / Golosinas	3	Alimentos no perecederos	4
Animales	5	Frutas y verduras	6	Carne y pollo	7	Pescado	8
Electrónica	9	Electrodoméstico s	10	Ropa y calzado	11	Artesanías	12
Tarjeta celular	13	Carpintería	14	Peluquería	15	Costura	16
Material de construcción	17	Productos de Belleza	18	Medicina tradicional / herboristería			19
Otro *(cuál?)*	20						

14. ¿De dónde obtienes la mayoría de los productos o servicios que vendes?							
Mayorista	1	Comercio pequeño	2	Mercado informal / otro vendedor	3	Agricultor	4
Lo obtengo gratis	5	Lo produzco yo o mi familia			6	Compro en otro país	7

Otro *(especificar)*	8	

15a. Formás parte de una organización que represente a vendedores?	Sí	1
	No	2
15b. Qué tipo de organización es? *(Incluir el nombre de la organización)*		

16. ¿Cuánto tiempo llevas trabajando en la venta / en la vía pública?		Años

17a. ¿Cuántas horas trabajas normalmente cada día?		Horas
17b. ¿Cuántos días trabajas normalmente cada semana?		Días
17c. ¿Tienes horarios de trabajo diferentes cada día / cada semana?	Sí	1
	No	2

18c. Cómo es tu acuerdo laboral?	Trabajo por cuenta propia	1	
	Trabajo con mi familia	2	
	Soy empleado/a	3	
	Otro *(especificar)*	4	
18b. Si existe, el acuerdo es:	De palabra	1	
	Escrito	2	
18a. Si tenés un acuerdo ¿hay alguien que te paga por hacer este trabajo?	Sí	1	
	No	2	

SOLO PARA DUEÑOS DE PUESTOS Y VENDEDORES

19. ¿Cómo es tu lugar de venta de tus productos / servicios?							
El suelo / manta	1	Mesa	2	Carrito	3	Auto	4
Puesto fijo al aire libre	5	Puesto fijo bajo techo	6	Otro (especificar)	7		

20a. ¿Pagas por trabajar en este espacio?	Sí	1
	No	2

20b. Si es así, ¿a quién le pagas?	Gobierno nacional / provincial o funcionario del gobierno	1	
	Gobierno municipal / local o agencia del municipio	2	
	Dueño/a del puesto	3	
	Otro *(especificar)*	4	
20c. ¿Cuánto pagas por mes?	Pesos		

21a. ¿Tu negocio tiene permiso / registro municipal?	Sí	1
	No	2
21b. Si es así, ¿qué documento es? (especificar)		

22a. Alguna vez te han ofrecido asistencia para formalizar tu negocio? (por ejemplo: registro legal, permisos)	Sí	1
	No	2
22b. ¿Qué desafíos o barreras principales te impiden formalizar tu trabajo? (por ejemplo, costos, falta de información, trámites difíciles)		

23a. ¿Pediste un préstamo para llevar adelante tu negocio? **<u>(Si no, pasa a la pregunta 23e)</u>**	Sí	1
	No	2
23b. Si es así, para qué usaste el préstamo?		
23c. Si es así ¿todavía estás pagando el préstamo?	Sí	1
	No	2
23d. Si es así, ¿quién te dio el préstamo?	Banco / app financiera	1
	Entidad cooperativa	2

	Amigos o familiares	3	
	Dueño del puesto	4	
	Prestamista	5	
	Otro *(especificar)*	6	
23e. Si no es así, ¿qué forma de financiamiento usas para tu negocio?			

PARA TODOS/AS

24. ¿De quién recibís dinero en tu trabajo?	De clientes	1	
	De un empleador	2	
	Otro (especificar)	3	

25. Como parte de tu trabajo ¿cuánto dinero usas para los siguientes gastos?		**$Pesos / Por mes**
a	**Proveedores (quienes te suministran los bienes para tu negocio)**	
b	**Multas / pagos (por ejemplo, a la policía)**	
c	**Impuestos (tasas municipales, derechos de importación)**	
d	**Licencia / registro del negocio**	
e	**Seguro del negocio**	
f	**Monotributo / obra social**	
g	**Pago al dueño del puesto**	
h	**Otros trabajadores que ayudan en el negocio**	
i	**Pago de préstamo para el negocio**	
j	**Alquiler del espacio (por ejemplo, puesto en el mercado)**	
k	**Guardería / depósito / baulera de mercadería**	
l	**Seguridad**	
m	**Limpieza**	

n	**Gastos de vehículos (por ej. combustible, seguros, estacionamiento)**	
o	**Cualquier otro pago**	
	Especificar:	
	Total	

Quienes responden pueden estimar ingresos por día, por semana, por mes o por año

26. ¿Cuánto ganás en total, antes de pagar a otras personas u otros gastos? (Ingreso bruto)	a) Por día	1	Pesos	
	b) Por semana	2		
	c) Por mes	3		
	d) Por año	4		
	Seleccionar una opción			

Quienes responden pueden estimar ingresos por día, por semana, por mes o por año

27. ¿Cuánto te queda de bolsillo, después de hacer todos los pagos? **(Ingreso neto)**	Por día	1	Pesos	
	Por semana	2		
	Por mes	3		
	Por año	4		
	Seleccionar una opción			

28a. Después de todos los gastos, ¿cuánto ganas en un día muy bueno / ocupado? *(Ingreso neto)*	Pesos	
28b. Después de todos los gastos, ¿cuánto ganas en un día malo / con poco movimiento? *(Ingreso neto)*	Pesos	

29a. ¿Cuál es la principal fuente de ingresos de tu hogar?	Mi trabajo	1	
	Trabajo informal de otro miembro del hogar	2	
	Salario formal de otro miembro del hogar	3	
	Otro *(especificar)*	4	
29b. ¿Cuántas personas dependen de tus ingresos? (grupo familiar)			

30a. ¿Cuáles son los principales problemas que enfrentas en tu trabajo?	
30b. ¿Qué desafíos o barreras específicas crees que enfrentan las mujeres?	
30c. ¿Qué desafíos o barreras específicas crees que enfrentan las personas con discapacidad?	
30d. ¿Qué desafíos o barreras específicas crees que enfrentan los jóvenes?	

31a. ¿Alguna vez has experimentado violencia y/o acoso en el trabajo?	Sí	1
	No	2
31b. ¿Qué tipos de violencia y/o acoso enfrentas? *(Elige todas las opciones que correspondan)*	Física	1
	Verbal	2
	Psicológica	3
	Sexual	4
	Otro *(especificar)*	
31c. ¿De quién sueles recibir violencia y/o acoso? *(Elige todas las opciones que correspondan)*	Cliente	1
	Otros vendedores	2
	Policía	3
	Agentes de gobierno / autoridad local / inspector municipal	4
	Otro *(especificar)*	
31d. ¿Alguna vez la policía o funcionarios del gobierno te sacaron/decomisaron la mercadería?	Sí	1
	No	2
31e. Si es así, ¿te dieron un Acta?	Sí	1
	No	2
31f. Si es así, ¿Pudiste recuperar tu mercadería?	Sí	1

	No	2

32a. ¿Tienes acceso a agua corriente en tu lugar de trabajo?	Sí	1
	No	2
32b. ¿Tienes acceso a electricidad en tu lugar de trabajo?	Sí	1
	No	2
32c. ¿Tienes acceso a un baño en tu lugar de trabajo?	Sí, gratuito	1
	Sí, pago	2
	No	3
32d. ¿Hay baños separados para mujeres y hombres?	Sí	1
	No	2
32e. (Si el encuestado es vendedor) ¿Tienes acceso a almacenamiento para tu mercadería?	Sí	1
	No	2

33a. ¿Cómo accedés a los siguientes derechos / servicios?		*(Elige todas las opciones que correspondan)*	**33b. ¿Cómo se proporciona?** *(Indica el número correspondiente)*			
			Arreglo informal comunitario / laboral	Gobierno	Sector privado	Otro (*especificar)*
			1	2	3	4
a	**Serv. Funerarios**	1				
b	**Pensión / Jubilación**	2				
c	**Obra social / Serv. Salud**	3				
d	**Asistencia por Discapacidad**	4				
e	**Días de licencia por maternidad**	5				
f	**ART**	6				
g	**Cuidados familiares (por ej. cuidado de menores)**	7				
h	**Otro** *(especificar)*	8				

33c. ¿Qué medidas de apoyo podrían mejorar tu seguridad económica?

34. ¿Alguna vez has participado en consultas o negociaciones con autoridades locales y/o el gobierno nacional/provincial sobre tus condiciones laborales?	Sí	1
	No	2

35. ¿Conoces alguna política o programa que apoye a los vendedores ambulantes y de mercados? *(Especificar)*	

36. ¿Qué crees que se podría hacer para abordar los desafíos que enfrentas en el trabajo? ¿Cuáles son tus propuestas de mejora?	

37. ¿Hay algo más que quieras decir sobre tu trabajo, o sobre esta encuesta? **¿Tenés alguna pregunta para hacernos?**	

Si querés enterarte de los resultados de esta investigación o para saber más sobre la UTEP, por favor dejanos tus datos de contacto ***[WhatsApp / Número de teléfono]***

Gracias.

Observaciones / Reflexiones del encuestador/a	

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion Guidelines

Each FGD will involve (8-12 people) in an accessible venue (café, community hall etc) close to their respective workplace (markets or street vending sites). Each FGD will take between one and two hours. It is important to ensure that each focus group includes (where possible):

- A mix of demographics (age, gender, ethnicity etc.)
- Various types of vendor/trader (e.g. food, crafts, services)
- Coverage of different locations / areas
- Engagement with marginalised groups (women, youth, elderly, vendors with disabilities)

Each focus group to be facilitated by a UTEP team member. Each focus group to be also attended by a rapporteur (note-taker) who takes detailed notes of the discussion, including key points, observations, recurring themes and quotations. Where deemed appropriate and where consent is given, information can also be recorded via audio or video.

Focus group participants are volunteers and paid a small allowance to compensate for loss of earnings.

Guide Questions for Facilitator

1. *What are the major problems that you face in your work?*
2. *Do you think this is the same for other workers?*
3. *What do you think are the main challenges or barriers facing women traders / young people / people with disabilities / other marginalised groups?*

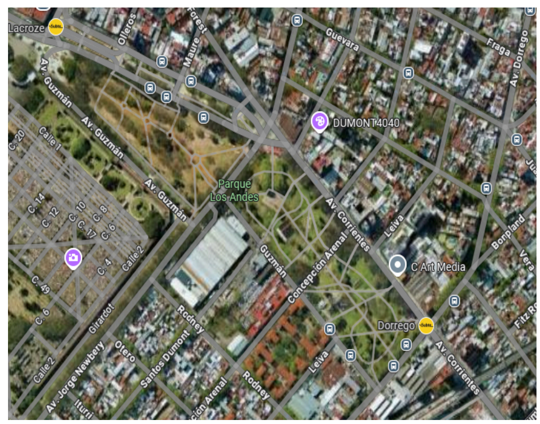
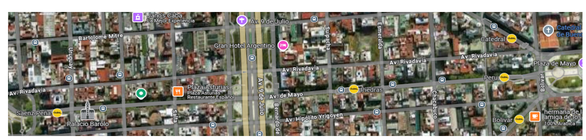
If issues relating to **violence, harassment and safety; access to facilities**; **financial support**; **access to credit/loans; or legal registration or recognition** are not mentioned, ask about these, but do not exclude other issues.

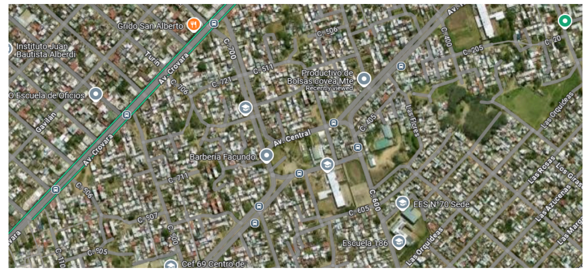
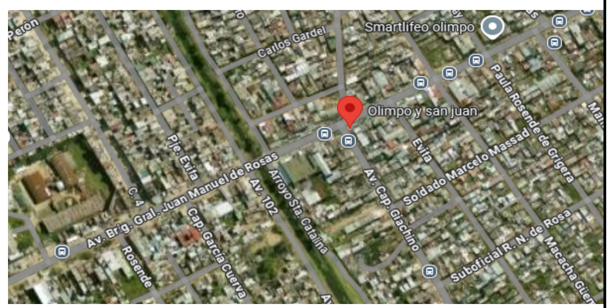
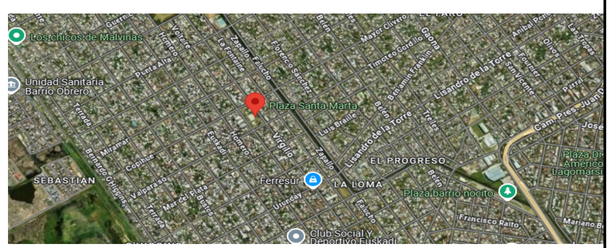
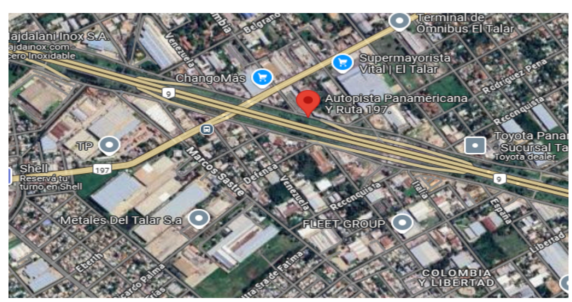
4. *What types of policies, programmes or support systems are available to support market traders / street vendors? Do you think that women have equal access to these programmes?*
5. *What participation do you have in consultation or negotiation with local authorities about your working conditions?*

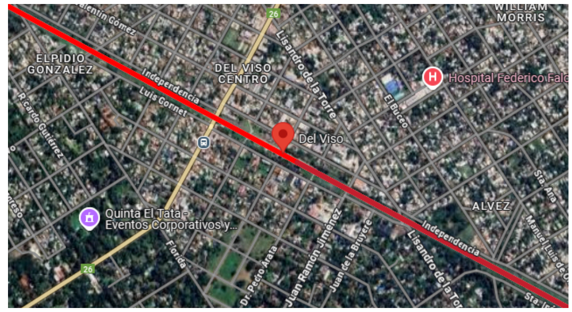
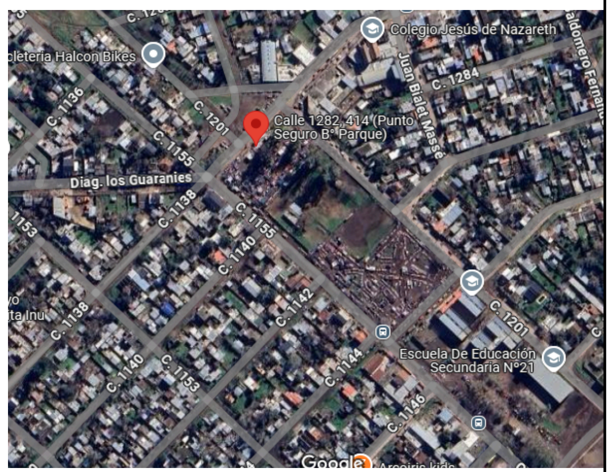
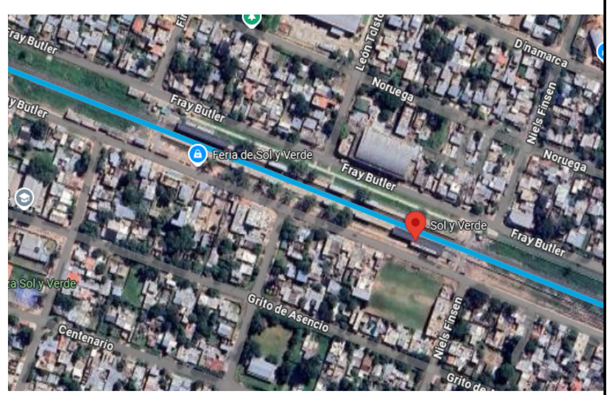
6. *How could these problems be addressed? What policies or support systems would improve your working conditions?*
7. *Are there any practical solutions that you would propose to the government or the city authorities?*
8. *What role do you think unions or associations could play in improving your working conditions and livelihoods?*

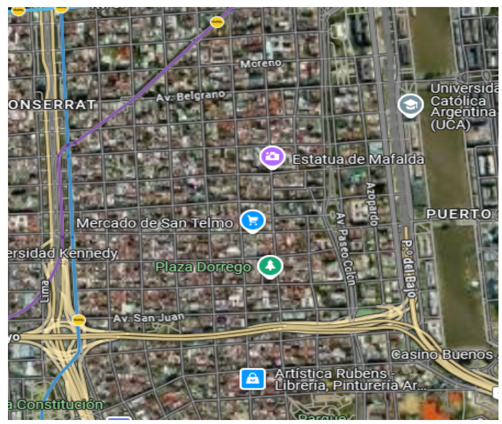
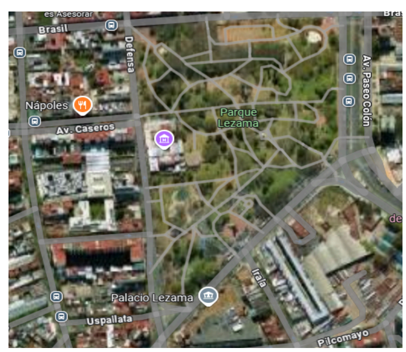
If issues such as **social protection** or **measures for formalising work** are not mentioned, ask about these.

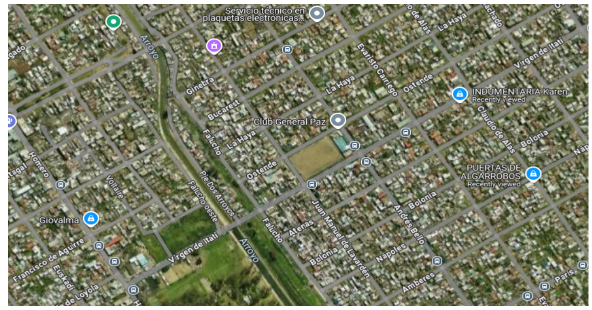
Appendix C: Description of Markets

Once-Recova **Once-Olla** Location: Pueyrredón Avenue and Rivadavia Avenue, and surrounding streets Days and hours: Open Monday to Friday from 7:00 to 19:00, and Saturdays from 9:00 to 17:00, although with a strong presence of local government agents to prevent vendors from working. Type: Informal street market on avenues and streets in a commercial area. Numerous street vendors also operate there. Number of vendors: 250	
Los Andes Location: Los Andes Park, Corrientes Avenue and Jorge Newbery Street, Buenos Aires City Days and Hours: The market operates on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Format: The permanent market has a formalized section along Guzmán and Dorrego streets. The majority of the market is informal, with vendors using blankets to display their goods. Notes: This market expanded during 2024 with the addition of groups that were displaced from other vending areas in Buenos Aires City (Flores, Once, Centenario Park). Number of Vendors: 2000	
Parrilleros Location: Av. de Mayo, between Bolívar and Uruguay streets; and surrounding streets, Buenos Aires City. Days and times: Operates during demonstrations and public holidays. The survey was conducted on Memorial Day (March 24). Modality: Fixed street market; they have an informal agreement. The vendors have carts that they set up for preparing food, or blankets for selling textiles and accessories. Number of vendors: 120	

Bolsas - Matanza Location: 17 de Octubre Avenue and 500th Street, Villegas, La Matanza, Buenos Aires Province Days and hours: Open Monday to Friday from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM Modality: Meeting point for street vendors. Several stalls selling cleaning products are located in the area, and the vendors sell these products door-to-door in the surrounding neighborhoods. Number of vendors: 75	
Olimpo - Lomas Location: Capitán Giachino Avenue and Olimpo Avenue, Ing. Budge, Lomas de Zamora, Buenos Aires Province Days and hours: Monday to Friday from 8:00 to 12:00, Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 to 18:00 Type: Permanent informal street market. Number of vendors: 300	
Santa Marta - Lomas Location: Virgilio and Valparaíso, Ing. Budge, Lomas de Zamora, Province of Buenos Aires Days and times: Wednesdays and Fridays from 5 PM to 8 PM. Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Type: Fixed informal market, coordinated by the MTE and with a clear focus on supporting the local community. It does not have the characteristics of a consolidated market. Number of vendors: 1000	
Tigre Location: Pan-American Highway and Route 197, El Talar, Buenos Aires Province Days and times: Monday to Friday, 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM Modality: Informal, fixed stalls selling coffee and food. They operate during morning rush hour, at a transportation hub near an industrial area. Number of vendors: 30	

Del Viso Location: Del Viso train station and surrounding streets, Del Viso, Buenos Aires Province Days and times: Monday to Sunday from 8:00 to 19:00 Type: Permanent informal market in the area surrounding the train station. Number of vendors: 100	
Carolina - F. Varela Location: 1138 and 115th Street, Ing. Allan, Florencio Varela, Buenos Aires Province Days and hours: Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM Type: Established informal market. It offers a wider variety of products, including tools and live animals such as rabbits, chickens, hens, and roosters, plants, cleaning supplies, branded clothing, and school supplies. Number of vendors: 500	
Sol y Verde - José C Paz Location: Fray Butler Street, Sol y Verde Station, José C. Paz, Buenos Aires Province Days and hours: Monday to Sunday, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM Type: Permanent informal market, located on railway land adjacent to the train station. Number of vendors: 200	
Tren San Martín Location: San Martín railway line Days and times: Monday to Sunday from 6:00 to 20:00 Method: Street vending on the train carriages. Number of vendors: 30	

Feria San Martín Location: San Martín Street and 52nd Street, San Martín, Buenos Aires Province Days and Hours: Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, from 6 PM to 10 PM. Type: Permanent market with an informal agreement with the municipality. Number of vendors: 80.	
San Telmo Location: Defensa Street between Brasil and Belgrano, Buenos Aires City Days and times: Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 to 20:00 Type: Formal market. The market is recognized and managed jointly by an association of vendors and the city government. Number of vendors: 125.	
Parque Lezama Location: Defensa, Brasil, Paseo Colón, and Martín García streets; City of Buenos Aires Days and times: Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 to 20:00 Type: Permanent, formal market. The market is managed by the Buenos Aires city government. It also includes an informal section. Number of vendors: 300.	
Solano Location: 844th Avenue and Donato Álvarez Street, San Francisco Solano, Quilmes, Buenos Aires Province Days and hours: Monday to Sunday, from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM Type: Permanent informal street market in a commercial area. Number of vendors: 150	

<table>
<tr>
<td>Moreno
Location: Mitre Avenue and España Street, Moreno, Buenos Aires Province
Days and hours: Monday to Saturday, 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM
Type: Permanent informal market in a public space, near the train station.
Number of vendors: 80</td>
<td>
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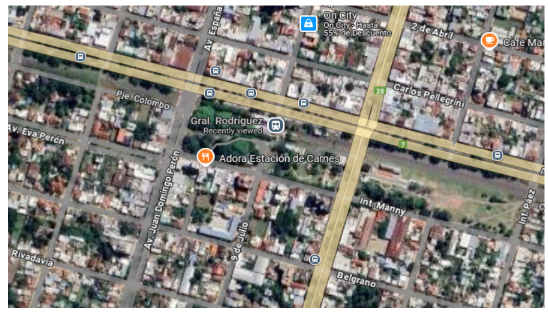
<td>Gral Rodríguez
Location: 25 de Mayo Avenue and Bernardo de Irigoyen Street, General Rodríguez, Buenos Aires Province
Days and hours: Monday to Sunday, 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM
Type: Permanent informal market near the train station.
Number of vendors: 50</td>
<td>
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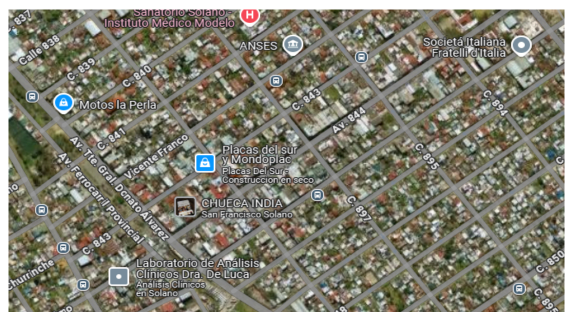
<td>V. Albertina - Lomas
Location: Virgen de Itatí between Antonio Machado and Homero; Andrés Bello between Itatí and París, and surrounding streets
Days and times: Monday to Friday from 9:00 to 12:00 and from 16:00 to 20:00, Saturdays and Sundays from 8:00 to 20:00
Type: Informal, permanent street market on Virgen de Itatí and Andrés Bello streets
Number of vendors: 1000</td>
<td>
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