**Xiluva’s Interview notes**

**INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

Date: 6 March 2021 – present

Location: Joburg Market, Food Stall between Fruit and Vegetable hubs

Interviewer: Makhanana Malungane

1. **PERSONAL INFORMATIONS**

Name/pseudonym: Xiluva

Age: 37

Sex: Female

Highest Level of Education: Grade 10

Role in agro-food system: Processor, sells prepared food

Do you have other occupations? No

How long have you been involved in the business? Since 2015

1. **PROCESSOR**

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| What do you process? | I sell cooked food at the Joburg Market |
| Is this the only thing you process? | Yes |
| Have long have you been processing this? |  |
| Have you always processed here? | No. I used to work for a woman at stall no 9 near A hub at the market. |
| How did you start this business? How did you hear and learn about the business? | I heard about cooking food at the market while attending a catering course from a woman I had known from Mozambique. I saved some money while working as a helper. I also got a loan from my sister. |
| Where do you source the produce, you process? | Joburg Market Cash & Carry  The main hubs  Mandela Market  Johannesburg CDB  Buyers from the market  Drivers |
| What machinery and other inputs do you use? Do you own or hire inputs, such as packaging, electricity use, repair services needed such as sharing? | *Equipment*   * Gas stove * Plates * Pots * Fridge * Plastic chair and tables   *Packaging*   * Cellophane containers for take-aways |
| How often do you source the different produce? | Daily, depending on what I need. I generally stock my vegetables on Monday on Friday and meat, ice blocks and cooldrinks, daily. The gas, which I share will stall behind me, I stock once it is finished from a guy who buys it for me. |
| Why source from these places? | Fresh produce  It is close by and I don’t have to buy the stuff myself and I can send one of the porters to buy it for me.  Non-perishables  It depends on the price. Sometimes I buy from the cash and carry in the market but when the prices are too high I buy from the town [Johannesburg CBD].  The gas is delivered by a guy from outside the market. |
| To employ any people and if so how many? | Yes. It is myself and 3 other ladies. The stalls are open 24-hours. I work the day shift with the lady in the stall behind me and the other two ladies work the night shift. |
| Who do you sell to (probe wholesale/retail ratios) | The majority of customers are truck drivers and buyers at the market. |
| Are you part of any association or organisations? | Yes. The informal organisation of food stall owners |
| Do you have any other collaborations with others | Yes. I collaborate with the other Tsonga speaking ladies that sell food but it is nothing serious. At times we come together to buy a rejected load of produce if we cannot afford it alone. We also borrow things from one and another. But I don’t trust them |
| Since this time last year, has there been any changes, and if so what changes and when and if there was a change what caused the changes, in |  |
| 1. *What do you sell?*   Yes. I had decreased my portion sizes   1. The prices you sell for?   No. It would be futile there is just too much competition.   1. In your cost of doing business?   Yes. The price of most of the produce increased especially during the period before Easter 2021. There were some things I just could not afford and decided to leave them out of the menu. My profit decreased a lot because of this.  The price of the gas stove was also high   1. Frequency of purchasing inputs.   Yes. Because fewer people come and visit my stall I sell fewer plates so I cannot stock as often as I used to   1. People you collaborate with   No   1. The number of people you work with?   Yes. I am going to have to hire 2 more people. I was able to get a stall by the A hub. So I need to get one person each for the day and night shift.   1. The organisation of the market   No   1. The government regulations or taxes or other government interventions?   Yes. I was not able to operate during alert level 5 and 4 of the lockdown   1. How you travel to get your inputs and the transport used?   Yes. During the early parts of alert level 3, it was hard to travel because of the restriction in numbers. But it got better over time.   1. What has been the biggest impact of Covid-19 on your business? Do you think this is a short-term impact or long-term?   Loss of incomes and customers. I don’t think it will last for long. Working at the market is always like this there are always ups and downs.   1. What were the impacts of the lockdown on your business? Have you recovered from this?   Loss of income. I don’t make the same amount of money I use to make before the lockdown. It is very hard. I had thought it was getting better right before the second wave but then it got worse, especially around Easter when I would generally make a lot of money   1. Have there been any other impacts in your life from Covid-19 and lockdown?   A few of the people I knew passed away. But no one close to me. |

H. COVID-19 and COVID measures

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| What do you know about government responses to Covid? | The government is trying to protect the country. They requested that everyone wears a mask and that we should wash our hands. |
| How did you hear about Covid and the government responses to it? | I had about Covid-19 from the market employees when they told us we could not come to work anymore because of the lockdown. |
| How have these responses affected you? | They made it hard for me to make a living. Because they closed down the stall |
| How have Covid and Covid measures affected your household and reproductive work? Any effects on economic activities | I was able to take care of my two children during alert level 4 and 5 the which is quite rare for me because I work the day shift and come back home late because I sometimes go buy stock in the CBD. |
| How have you responded to the changes brought by Covid? | I wear a mask and wash my hand regularly. I also make sure that my customers wash their hands before and after they eat |
| Have you benefitted from any Covid related government or non-government support? If so, what support was received? | No |
| How have you responded to the changes imposed by the government? | 1. What did they do in response (probe any innovations, changes in equipment or technology)?   N/A   1. Participation in any associations? Has the role of that association changed?   No   1. Have you been part of or had any discussion with any government officials or leaders? If so with who/which level of government? Did you get any benefit or see any change from that discussion?   No |
| Has there been any change since Covid in what you and your family eat? | I was home full-time during the first 3 months of the lockdown. |

**6 March 2021**

Joburg Market, City Deep

I left the house at 6:30. It took 20 mins to get to the market because of traffic on the R59. Along the way, numerous bakkies seem to travel in the same direction. Before arriving at the entrance of the market, there a lot of people moving in different directions. Some look like they're on their way to work while others look like they are coming to the market. Just before the entrance, there is a man selling masks to people getting off the taxis in front of the market entrance. Once people get off the taxis, they speed walk or run into the market.

I drive into the entrance. As always there are 2 guards spraying sanitiser on visitor’s hands. Today they don’t seem to be armed. It may be because this the first time the market has open in 5 days because of the Easter long weekend. Inside it is buzzing with people. Every person seems determined. Porters move in a fast fashion while jack lifts harmoniously move in between the cars.

I park my car in front of the Management offices. I head towards the vegetable hub. Before I get there, I stop at one of Xiluva’s stall. Xiluva has two stalls where she sells prepares food to visitors to the market. She offers a proper 7 colours meal at just R30 a plate. At her stall, there are over 8 salads in plastic buckets with which she. serves with either pap or rice or both and meat. Xiluva also sells tea and coffee and fat cakes. She buys her stock from the big cash and carry it next to the market management offices and gets her fresh produce from the halls or Mandela market. She says she has no regular person she buys from it depends on the price. When she buys from the halls she uses her card but sometimes it takes too long to load money on the card so she buy from other people who bought from there but first she checks their slips she doesn’t want any trouble. Because If she were to buys from someone that cannot prove where they bought the produce it would be confiscated when people that work in the halls do random checks among the stalls.

Xiluva lives in Spriut in Katlehong. She is originally from a village on the outskirts of Maputo, Mozambique. She came to South Africa as a teenager to help out her sister, who was heavily at the time. While staying with her sister’s family, Xiluva attended school until grade 10. After this, she worked in a factory in Alrode (Alberton a few kilometres from Spruit) and as a helper in the houses of Brackenhurst (a suburb in Alberton)

Although Xiluva sells food (an essential service) to people who visit the market Xiluva’s stalls were banned from operating in alert level 5 and 4 of the lockdown. Xiluva viewed those 3 months as the hardest of the Covid period because she could not make money to feed her family. Xiluva says some of her neighbours got food packages from organisations and the government, but she did not any form of assistance to feed her family. But she was grateful that the little that she had was able to feed her family for the period, although not like before.

Xiluva’s two stalls began to operate on 1 June 2020. She says her regulars were excited to see her back in business but she was not making the same amount of profit she uses to make pre-Covid. Business was slow, fewer people visited her stalls and the price of inputs was just higher than before. Xiluva remarks that prices peaked in March 2021 rising more than 4 times the usual price. She could not afford to keep up with the rise in prices and had to ration was she bought and opted to leave some items out completely. On a visit I made 4 weeks later, Xiluva said input prices had dropped especially for vegetables except for tomatoes but the recovery has not recovered to before the food price hike (in mid-March 2021).

When I asked her about the future, Xiluva folds her arms over her chest, presses her lips together and looks upwards and says “All I have is faith no else can help me but God now. But I just cannot sit here and wait for a miracle I have to work hard because I am the breadwinner at home. My husband works part-time so does not have a steady income, so it becomes my responsibility to take of the family”.

Despite the dip in business Xiluva is opening a new third stall in the market and is hiring 2 more people to help her out on 1 May 2021.