

# **The Untold Stories of Women Street Vendors: Unveiling Their Health Challenges and the Urban Environment**

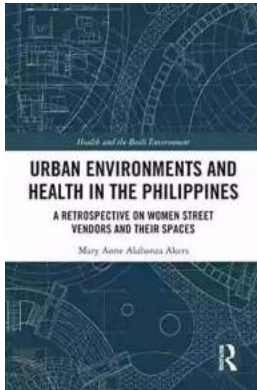
Street vending is a ubiquitous sight in urban landscapes, showcasing a vibrant culture and providing livelihood opportunities for countless individuals. While often overlooked or undervalued, women street vendors play a critical role in shaping the urban fabric and economy. This article presents a retrospective analysis of the challenges faced by women street vendors, particularly in relation to their health and the built environment.

As the urban landscape transforms at an unprecedented pace, traditional vending spaces are gradually shrinking or being allocated to modern commercial establishments. Within these rapidly changing dynamics, women street vendors face multifaceted challenges that go beyond making ends meet. Their struggles extend to their overall health, a direct consequence of operating in unregulated spaces amidst constant exposure to environmental hazards.

## **Women Street Vendors and Public Health**

Women street vendors not only face economic and social disparities but are also subjected to adverse health conditions due to their occupation. Constantly navigating unhygienic conditions and insufficient access to clean water and sanitation facilities, these women endure higher risks of contracting infectious diseases.

**Urban Environments and Health in the Philippines:  
A Retrospective on Women Street Vendors and**



## their Spaces (Health and the Built Environment)

by Michael David Sy(1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 7277 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Print length : 176 pages



In addition, long working hours, exposure to extreme weather conditions, and lack of breaks impose significant physical and mental stress on these vendors. Health issues such as chronic pain, musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory ailments, and mental health disorders are prevalent among women street vendors, with limited access to healthcare exacerbating their vulnerabilities.

### **The Impact of the Built Environment on Women Street Vendors**

The built environment plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of women street vendors. Inadequate infrastructure and lack of designated vending spaces contribute to a myriad of challenges for these women. The absence of appropriate shelter exposes vendors to harsh weather conditions, increasing the risk of heatstroke, hypothermia, and other weather-related illnesses.

The lack of proper waste management facilities leads to unsanitary conditions, making women vendors susceptible to vector-borne diseases. Furthermore, the absence of secure storage facilities increases the risk of theft and violence, perpetuating feelings of insecurity and impacting mental well-being.

### **Empowering Women Street Vendors: Strategies for Change**

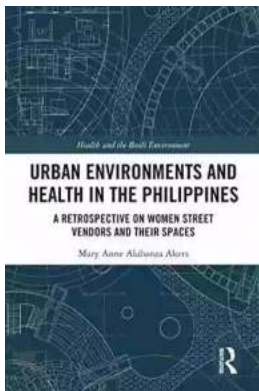
Addressing the challenges faced by women street vendors and prioritizing their health and well-being requires a comprehensive approach. Strategies that can significantly improve their living and working conditions include:

1. **Providing Clean and Safe Vending Spaces:** Municipal authorities should allocate designated spaces with basic amenities such as shelter, clean water, and proper waste management facilities to ensure a safe and hygienic working environment.
2. **Access to Healthcare:** Expanding healthcare facilities and creating mobile healthcare units that cater specifically to the needs of women street vendors can help address their health concerns and provide preventive and curative care.
3. **Education and Skills Development:** Offering vocational training and educational programs can empower women street vendors to enhance their skills and explore alternative livelihood opportunities, mitigating their vulnerability.
4. **Legal Protection:** Implementing policies and regulations that protect the rights of women street vendors, including access to social security, maternity benefits, and representation in decision-making processes.
5. **Public Awareness and Support:** Increasing awareness among the general public about the contributions and challenges faced by women street vendors can foster a supportive environment and encourage collective action towards their empowerment.

Women street vendors have long been an invisible force shaping the urban landscape and economy. However, their struggles with health issues and unfavorable working conditions persist due to inadequate attention and support. It

is imperative that society recognizes their contributions and takes concerted action to address the challenges they face.

By providing safe and clean vending spaces, healthcare access, education, legal protection, and public support, we can empower these women and create a more inclusive urban environment that respects and uplifts their voices, ultimately leading to healthier and more equitable cities for all.



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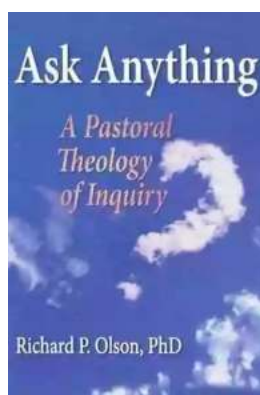
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Urban Environments and Health in the Philippines offers a retrospective view of women street vendors and their urban environments in Baguio City, designed by American architect and planner Daniel Burnham in the early twentieth century, and established by the American imperial government as a place for healing and well-being.

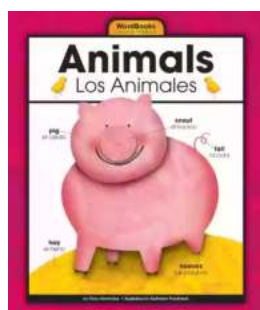
Based on a transdisciplinary multi-method study of street vendors, the author offers a unique perspective as a researcher of the place, to ultimately ask how marginalized women authenticate and democratize prime urban spaces for their livelihoods. This book provides a portal to another way of seeing and understanding streets and people, covering spatial units at multiple scales, design imperialism and its impact on health, and resilience strategies for challenging realities.

Blending subjects of architecture, planning, and health, this book is an ideal read for those interested in fields of urban planning and design, public health, landscape architecture, geography, and social sciences.



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