



POLICY BRIEF

URBANIZATION, SERVICE DELIVERY AND HARNESSING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND

Introduction

Uganda's urban population is about 27% of the total population with Kampala as the most populated urban area (UBOS, 2022). Although the level of urbanization is relatively low, the rate of urbanization, estimated at 5.2%, per annum is very high and projections indicate that half of the country's population will be urbanized by 2050. Uganda's efforts to engender the demographic transition and work towards harnessing the demographic dividend cannot be understood outside the context of urbanization. Planned and organized urban spaces and improvements in social services are necessary prerequisites for harnessing the Demographic Dividend. A study about urbanization and service delivery in selected Uganda cities was conducted between March-May 2022.

Objectives of the study

The purpose of the research was to examine the impact of urbanization on accelerating the demographic transition, hence attainment of the demographic dividend. The specific objectives of the research were to analyze the current situation of urban settlements, analyze the drivers of urbanization, establish the relationship between urbanization and service delivery, find out the

key challenges hindering organized urbanization and propose appropriate policy recommendations towards having organized urbanization.

Methodology

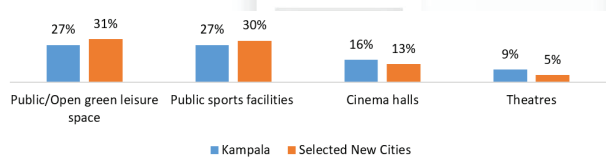
Six cities were selected for the study namely Kampala, Jinja, Masaka, Fortportal, Arua and Gulu. A sample of 936 respondents were selected for interview. Qualitative and Quantitative research methods were used. Household survey questionnaire, Document Review, Key Informant Interviews (KII), In-Depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were used. A mixed methods approach was used to analyze the field findings. Making sense out of the collected data involved running frequencies, computing, percentages and undertaking thematic analysis.

Key findings

1. The current situation of urban settlements

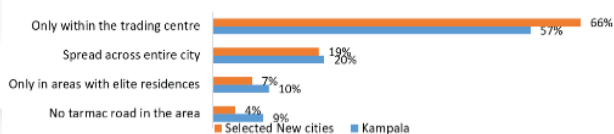
Green open or leisure space is a desirable quality in urban environments. However, findings indicate that a handful of city dwellers assented to the existence of recreational facilities. Only about 30% of the respondents acknowledged that Kampala and other cities had a public/open green leisure space or public sports facilities (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Availability of recreational facilities in a city



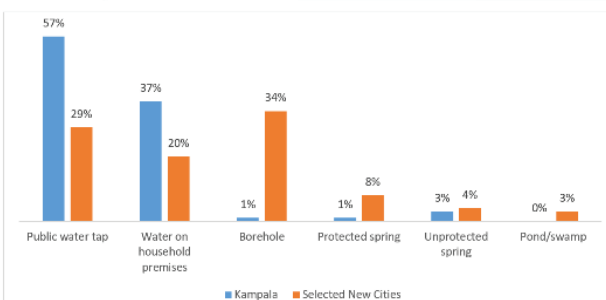
Majority of the respondents (57% for Kampala, 66% for other cities), reported that the tarmac roads they saw in their respective cities were only within the trading centers (Figure 2). Not so many respondents (20% for Kampala, 19% for other cities) reported that tarmac roads in their areas spread across the entire city. Rather uniquely, some respondents (10% in Kampala, 7% elsewhere) shared that the tarmac roads they knew of were confined in residential areas for the elites.

Figure 2: Coverage of tarmac roads in the city



Overall a sizable proportion of the respondents indicated that the roads in their areas were not well built and lacked strategic water channels (57%), were not spacious and betting of the city (57%), didn't have adequate walkways fit for PWDs and the elderly (62%), had road signs that were not visible and readable (56%), lacked adequate lights (69%) and were filled with potholes (48%). They also reported that the roads were highly dangerous for PWDs and the elderly (47%) and had dark spots highly risky for night movements (49%).

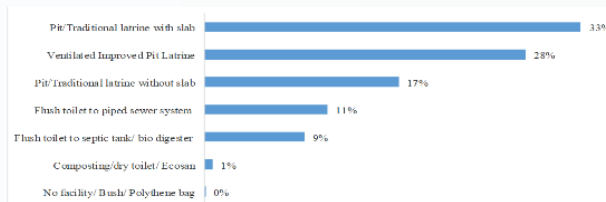
Figure 3: Households' main source of water for consumption



Most households were using a public water tap (43%) as the main source of water for consumption (Figure 3). A significant proportion of the respondents indicated that they had water on their household premises (28%) while 17% said they were using a borehole. A few households reported to be using a protected spring (4%), unprotected spring (4%) and pond/swamp (2%).

By expected urban standards, a high proportion of households in the six cities were still using traditional pit latrines with a slab (33%) and a ventilated improved pit latrine (28%) as their main toilet facilities. The proportion still using traditional pit latrine without slab (17%) was also high (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Households' main toilet facility



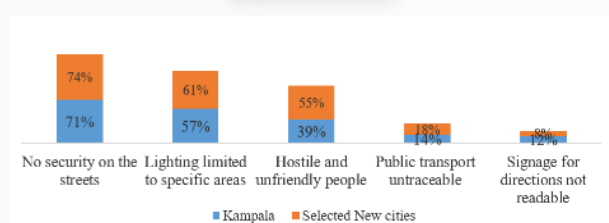
Regarding **health services**, under half of the dwellers (43%) in Kampala and about three quarters (74%) in the new cities revealed that health facilities within their areas were always short on medical supplies. Close to one half (47%) held that the facilities in their localities were distant from their household. Over one third of city dwellers interviewed in Kampala and about two-fifth of their counterparts in the new cities indicated that the facilities they had in their vicinity were not spacious enough to handle many patients. Health service delivery that is not well regulated was largely in private hands and the implications of this for both quality and affordability cast a gloomy picture about harnessing the DD.

Considering **education institutions** in cities, early childhood development centers were few and accessed by the privileged because they are ran by the private sector. Vocational training is still unpopular among the youth yet it is a gateway to human capital development. In the primary schools, the overall Pupil classroom ratio for the 16 schools surveyed was 90:1, much worse than

the one recommended by the Ministry of education and Sports and almost double the internationally recommended one of 40:1. This points to congestion in classrooms which has implications for learning, performance in public primary schools and definitely, progression in the school system.

Insecurity was reported to be adversely affecting night travel. A large proportion of respondents indicated that it was not safe to move in their cities at night. Absence of security and public transport as well as limited lighting were cited as key factors hindering safe, night travel within cities (Figure 5)

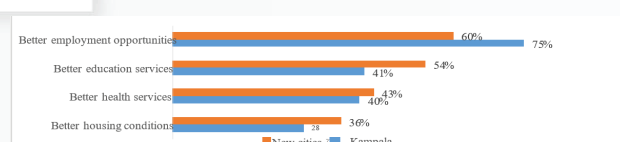
Figure 5: Limitations to night safety in the city



2. The Drivers of urbanization

The likes and preferences of a population for the city could be major factors that influences the movement and settlement patterns. As such, about three quarters (75%) of respondents in Kampala and about two-thirds (60%) of their counterparts in other cities liked employment opportunities in the city. These were closely followed by those who were attracted by affordable and quality education, then better health services and finally, better housing conditions (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Main reasons why the new place was better than the old one



3. Urbanization and service delivery

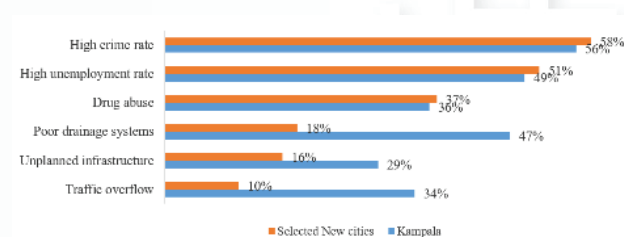
The high rate of urbanization has largely been spurred by the massive influx of people due to pull and push factors and annexation of the hitherto rural settings through government policy. The influx has inevitably

overwhelmed the available services in almost all sectors and any improvement in the services is quickly swallowed by the incessant burgeoning of urban populations and has led to challenges with the delivery of services within cities. In order to ensure that the rapidly growing populations are harnessed to become a dividend rather than a liability, city authorities have been challenged to re-think the services/resources they allocate to pockets of the city. The Central government has equally been challenged to re-think the share of the national budget extended to the city authorities as service delivery should henceforth not be seen as an end in itself but also a means towards harnessing the Demographic Dividend.

4. Key challenges hindering organized urbanization

The reported top challenges to organized urbanization in both Kampala and the other cities were; high crime rate, high levels of unemployment and drug abuse (Figure 7). Others were poor drainage systems and traffic related issues. These are great challenges to harnessing the demographic dividend as they either impede the productive potential of the population and or deprive them of their savings that would subsequently promote aggregate growth of the economy.

Figure 7: Challenges to organized urbanization



Policy recommendations and implications

In the first place we call upon government and its relevant organs to be keen at implementing policy issues generally. It is in this vein that we make the following recommendations;

One of the ingredients of sustainable cities and communities is the prevalence of open/green/leisure spaces where urban people can visit for pleasure and leisure in accordance with SDG11. The low prevalence of such spaces in most of the

cities calls for renewed effort to plan for them through a healthy public private partnerships.

Efforts are needed to strengthen traffic flows and patterns. This may involve carrying out regular assessments of traffic situation in the city to establish up to date population of motorized and non-motorized traffic as well as the carriage capacity of roads and their suitability for city use. City authorities may require doubling their effort to ensure seamless flow of human and motorized traffic during day and night. There is need to scale up installment of traffic systems notably lights, road signs and symbols. There is also need to register all boda bodas, mobilize and sensitize them about road safety and get them out of the central business district.

The low coverage of public sanitation facilities calls for efforts to improve the sanitation environment. Programs that target divisions with critical shortfalls are particularly desired. As the population of cities increases, the need for such facilities will correspondingly increase thus justifying the need for investment in the area.

The poor drainage systems call for enforcement of structural plans and construction of housing units. Drainage channels ought to be constructed on all roads linking entertainment, education, health, office and residential establishments to secure outlets. There is need to appraise the estates department of city authorities to ensure they have the requisite personnel and resources to ensure design and implementation of city's approved structural plan. This can be achieved better with the support of Local Council leaders and or retired civil servants in the community that can act as volunteers.

The ongoing curriculum reform ought to be wholly embraced in order to build competences that may gradually enable city learners translate into effective human resources. Vocationalization and acquisition of skills such as carpentry, welding, tailoring and cosmetology is a worthwhile way forward. This can translate into youths being better able to find and create jobs once they leave institutions of learning.

Any form of development can only happen if the security situation is favorable. The reported insecurity that characterizes city life is therefore a matter of concern and deserves focused interventions.

There is need to strengthen the legal systems and processes in all parts of the city to ensure security, law and order. Community policing also needs to be bolstered so that the community in charge of its security and can help police in talking to and if possible apprehending wrong elements in society.

References

- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2015). *The Growth Challenge: Can Ugandan Cities Get to Work*. 94622. Washington: The World Bank Group.
- National Planning Authority (2020). "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend for Uganda." Retrieved June 2, 2022.
- Owono, Opondo. (2020). "The Seven New Cities; Lessons from Kampala."
- UBOS. (2022) *2021 Statistical Abstract*. Kampala, Uganda: Uganda Bureau of Statistics.



National Population Council
Statistics House Plot 9 Colville Street
P.O. Box 2666, Kampala (Uganda)
E-mail: npcsec@npcsec.go.ug.