

# Chapter 17

## Urban Agriculture: A Response to the Food Supply Crisis in Kampala City, Uganda

E. N. Sabiiti and C. B. Katongole

**Abstract** Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, has experienced increases in the prices of basic food commodities since 2002, with the sharpest increase noticed over the period 2007–2011. Major factors contributing to this trend include rapid growth in the demand for food due to the increase in population, urbanisation, drought (climate changes) impacts in the agricultural areas of Uganda and a sharp increase in the cost of living driven by inflation. The increase in food prices has made it difficult for many low income earners in Kampala to meet their daily food requirements. In response, urban and peri-urban agriculture is making a very important contribution to the general food supply of the city. Besides making a significant contribution to the food basket of Kampala city, urban and peri-urban agriculture represents an important economic activity within the city. Emerging policy and planning frameworks support the continued positive contribution of urban and peri-urban agriculture. To that effect Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) now recognizes urban agriculture as a land use system and a vital policy issue. However, more is still needed from the public, urban authorities, urban planners and policy makers to strengthen this vital sector. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the development of urban and peri-urban agriculture and its contribution to the food supply crisis in Kampala city, as well as the process of developing policies to enable urban agriculture in Kampala city.

**Keywords** Food supply · Land use · Urban agriculture · Urban planning

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## 17.1 Introduction

Kampala is the capital city of the Republic of Uganda. It is located on the Northern shores of Lake Victoria (around 1,200 m above sea level) and surrounded by swamps in various areas. Its history can be traced back to the 1600s when it was established as the capital of the tribal Kingdom “*Buganda*” and it served as a political and administrative capital until 1893. In 1894 the British declared Uganda their protectorate and transferred the capital to Entebbe. Kampala returned as the capital city in 1962 with Uganda’s independence. According to Nyakaana et al. (2007), Kampala has evolved from a “city of seven hills” (8 km<sup>2</sup>) at independence (1962) to a city of more than 25 hills (covering an area of approximately 197 km<sup>2</sup>). Kampala derives its name from the Luganda word “*Mpala*” (antelope species—*Aepyceros melampus* that roamed around the area at that time).

Currently, Kampala is the only city in Uganda. In 2011, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) replaced Kampala City Council (KCC). The Authority is the governing body of the city on behalf of the central government subject to the KCCA Act 2010. The Authority is a corporate body with perpetual succession and may sue or be sued in its corporate name. The Authority consists of the following members (who are citizens of Uganda): The Lord Mayor; The Deputy Lord Mayor; one councillor directly elected by secret ballot to represent each electoral area in the city on the basis of universal adult suffrage; two councillors representing the youth, one of whom is female; two councillors with disabilities representing persons with disabilities, one of whom is female; one woman councillor directly elected by secret ballot to represent each electoral area in the city on the basis of universal adult suffrage; and one councillor representing each of the following professional bodies: Uganda Institute of Professional Engineers, Uganda Society of Architects, Uganda Medical Association and Uganda Law Society.

Kampala is growing faster than Uganda. The population of Kampala has grown from 458,503 in 1980 to the present estimate of about 1.79 million people. The urban population in Uganda is estimated at about six million, of which approximately 30 % live in Kampala (UBOS 2013). According to the 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census, Kampala city had a population of 1.2 million people. At that time, the population of the city was estimated to be growing at a rate of 5.1 % per year, and was projected to reach 3.03 million people by the year 2020 (UBOS 2006). The rapid population growth is largely explained by rural–urban migration. The net migration rate of Kampala was estimated at 11.7 % (UBOS 2006). People migrate from rural areas to urban centres due to declining agricultural productivity and the search for better employment opportunities as well as income (UNEP 2002). The population increase in Kampala has had profound effects on the demand for food, housing, land for various uses, infrastructure and social services. This process has caused declining living conditions among the poor, increases in unplanned and illegal settlements, and increases in the growth of slums as well as land use and land cover change (Nyakaana et al. 2007; JPII and JPC 2008; Mukiibi 2011).

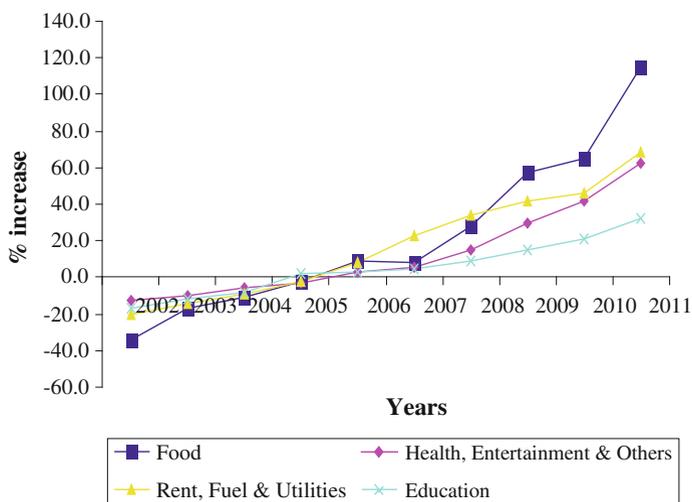
## 17.2 Food Demand and Supply in Kampala City

Having food available at any level, whether national or local, is of little value unless households have access to it or have the ability to purchase it (Diskin 1994). Hence, it is impossible to speak credibly of food security as being a problem of food supply, without at least making reference to the importance of accessibility and utilization (Maxwell 2001). Availability includes not only the production of food, but also distribution and exchange networks. Accessibility comprises affordability, market functionality, and whether or not preferences are met. Utilization denotes nutrition and the proper use of food, along with food safety.

The high urban population has necessitated the “importation” of food from distant production areas to Kampala on a daily basis to meet the high demand. Therefore, transport cost is one of the major factors that either directly or indirectly influences food availability and accessibility in Kampala. As transport fuel prices rise, transport costs increase, so do food prices. For instance, at the beginning of the year 2010 fuel prices increased by over 75 % within a period of only 24 months: from 2,025 UGX (US\$ 0.86) per litre of diesel in January 2010 to 3,567 UGX (US\$ 1.51) in December 2011 (UBOS 2010, 2011). As a result transport costs increased sharply and food became very expensive, which made it more difficult for many city dwellers to meet minimum food requirements. The challenge of the food supply crisis in Kampala is exacerbated by low incomes and the high cost of living driven by inflation. For instance, the monthly headline inflation rate went up almost fourfold from 8.8 to 27.0 % between January 2010 and December 2011 (UBOS 2010, 2011).

Food in Kampala city has become very expensive. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, food prices have undergone the sharpest increase over the period 2007–2011 compared to all the other basic items in Kampala (Fig. 17.1). There are several reasons for the high cost of food in Kampala, which include, among others, high urban population growth, high transport costs, inflation and adverse weather conditions. Due to the expensive cost of food the low-income earners are finding it difficult to meet the minimum food requirements. As a response, own-food production (crop and livestock) has become a common feature in Kampala city.

Urban agriculture has become a significant contributor to the food supply systems in Kampala city. Unlike the past when urban farmers belonged to low-income groups, they now belong to low through to high-income households for different reasons and with different strategies (Prain and Lee-Smith 2010). For the wealthy households, it is largely an entrepreneurial response to the ready market, whereby the high demand has opened the door for them to take advantage of market proximity and the large urban market.



**Fig. 17.1** Price increases for selected basic goods and services in Kampala over 10 years (calculated from consumer price indices for Kampala. *Base* 2005/2006 = 100)

### 17.3 Role of Urban Agriculture in Kampala City

Agriculture within African cities is not a recent occurrence and has been well established for decades (Sawio 1993). In Kampala, the increase in urban agriculture dates to the time of the Idi Amin regime (1971–1979) when the formal economy started to decline (Maxwell 1995). The formal economy was severely damaged by the “war of economic independence” of the regime, which was initiated with the expulsion of the Indian minority from Uganda in 1972. This rapidly gave rise to a highly informal economy dominated by smuggling, illegal currency transactions and state appropriation of private property (Banugire 1985). Idi Amin’s dictatorship was followed by the guerrilla war in the early to mid-1980s, which brought the current President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni’s National Resistance Movement (NRM) government into power. This guerrilla war was centred on the outskirts of Kampala city. These combined factors had a devastating impact on the urban economy. The value of wage labour drastically declined, which resulted in the massive growth of the informal economy (Bigsten and Kayizzi-Mugerwa 1992).

The civil unrest (1971–1985) was followed by the implementation of the structural adjustment policies, which were characterized by drastic cuts in jobs and public expenditure, trade liberalisation, increased interest rates and currency devaluation. As a consequence, unemployment increased and real incomes fell, while at the same time prices rose and welfare services declined. The urban poor were particularly hard hit (Tinker 1994; Drakakis-Smith et al. 1995). As a result many urban households resorted to all kinds of income generating activities in the

informal sector in order to make a living. Farming was one such option. However today, after the crisis periods, urban agriculture is increasing and is still critical to the survival of many households in Kampala. There are various factors to explain the status quo; most importantly, the rapid growth in the demand for food as a result of the high urban population growth, the ever increasing cost of living as a result of inflation and adverse weather conditions (due to climate change/variability), which has made access to food an even greater issue.

In the year 2000, the Government of Uganda launched the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) whose mission is “*eradicating poverty by transforming subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture*” (MAAIF and MFPED 2000). It was envisaged that improving the welfare of poor subsistence farmers in rural areas would require that they re-orient their production towards the market. More of their production must be marketed to enable them to earn higher incomes. For that reason, the Government of Uganda put the focus on agricultural development in rural areas with the view that the expanding urban population will stimulate food markets in urban areas and hence eradicate poverty among the rural producers. However, the rapid population growth in Uganda’s urban areas, particularly Kampala city, has not been in tandem with economic growth and development and many city dwellers are still struggling below both the food poverty line and the absolute poverty line.

As a response own-food production (crop and livestock) is becoming increasingly common among households within and around Kampala city. Food production activities in Kampala city are carried out in such locations as backyards (home compounds), undeveloped plots, wetlands/swamps, roadsides, waste dump sites and under power-lines among other places. It is also a common practice to leave animals to roam or scavenge around the city. In the early 1990s the proportion of households engaged in urban and peri-urban agriculture in Kampala was estimated to range between 25 and 36 % (Azuba 2002). Currently, the proportion is estimated at 49.2 % (David et al. 2010). This includes as many as 20–25 % of the residents of densely populated residential areas, and over 50 % in the peri-urban parts of the city. In a national study on urban agriculture, Azuba (2007) reported that 89 % of urban households purposely engage in urban and peri-urban agriculture for domestic food provisioning, while 53.3 % farm to supplement their income.

According to Lee-Smith (2008), extensive studies have categorized Kampala’s farming households into four types: commercial farmers; food self-sufficiency farmers; food security farmers and survival farmers. Commercial farmers, who are very few and generally well-off, are mostly found at the peri-urban periphery. These are the farmers that produce almost entirely for the urban market, though farmers in the other categories are also attempting to commercialise. The food self-sufficiency farmers are generally well-off and are found in all areas except the inner urban areas. These farmers produce food for household consumption. Food security farmers are those among the middle income or well-off households in the urban areas but among the poor in the peri-urban areas. These households practice urban agriculture as a secondary form of employment as well as a source of food.

They have other sources of income with farming helping them to save or supplement urban life-styles. The fourth category, “survival farmers” includes a very large number that are farming in order to avoid hunger. The majority of survival farmers are female-headed households (recently widowed or abandoned by their husbands) with very limited economic options (few resources and barely making ends meet). Such households are found in the urban areas where people cannot get enough food from smaller pieces of land and are more desperate for survival (David et al. 2010). However, Azuba (2007) reported another category of UPA practitioners in Kampala, which includes institutions such as educational institutions, health centres, prisons and police barracks.

Urban agricultural activities in Kampala city have evolved from purely subsistence to small-scale commercial production for both crops and livestock. However, commercialisation is more associated with livestock production (Sebastián et al. 2008; David et al. 2010; Katongole et al. 2011), with opportunities for sale of products such as milk, eggs and meat (Prain and Lee-Smith 2010). Livestock production is also associated with higher income households. The size of cultivated areas varies from 5.0 m<sup>2</sup> to 10 ha (NEMA 1997). According to Azuba (2002), 83 % of the farming households in Kampala have backyard gardens (in most cases of less than 0.4 ha), 10 % cultivate between 1 and 3 acres (chiefly urban farmers), while 7 %, which includes institutions and households mainly in peri-urban areas farm on two or more hectares.

## 17.4 Policy Environment for Urban Agriculture

Even though urban and peri-urban agriculture in Kampala city has been on the increase since independence (1962), its activities have been defined as illegal or a concern to many including state bureaucracies (David et al. 2010). For many years, the prevailing laws worked against urban agriculture in Kampala city, and studies and documentation acknowledging its existence were minimal. City authorities and state officials considered urban agriculture as an illegal practice, economically insignificant and a threat to public health (Maxwell and Zziwa 1992). The raising of livestock in and around Kampala city was considered a health risk for residents due to air pollution and offensive odours, road accidents caused by roaming livestock, and grazing areas acting as breeding grounds for mosquitoes and rodents (Maxwell et al. 1998).

There was also a fear that accidents could occur in the city due to reduced visibility caused by tall crops like maize and cassava being grown, especially near road bends. Other fears included indiscriminate drainage of swamps (leading to loss of their function of wastewater purification), destruction of green belts within the city (decreasing sink for carbon dioxide), increased solar radiation in the city, reduced soil water capacity and accelerated erosion (Matagi 2002). While many of these problems could be solved by sensitisation, Kampala city authorities often

responded by evicting urban farmers from public land and destroying their crops (Maxwell 1995). The 1964 Town Planning Act provided the basis for Kampala City enforcement officials to harass those who carried out urban farming in the city. The Act viewed farming as an activity at odds with urban standards.

According to Lee-Smith (2005), it was in the early 1990s that the Government of Uganda appointed the first officer in charge of agriculture in Kampala city/district. This officer did not have extension staff, resources or budget (Lee-Smith 2005). Maxwell (1994) published his research on Kampala in an IDRC book with the title “Cities Feeding People”. He strongly argued the case for the legitimization of urban farming and the review of municipal by-laws, basing his argument on the evidence of improved nutritional and food security status of households that had some access to land in the city for farming. However, it was not until 2005 that the then Mayor of Kampala city (His Worship John Ssebaana Kizito) announced new ordinances (urban agriculture; livestock and companion animals; meat; milk; and fish) at a press conference. Under the Local Government Act (1997), Sections 39 and 41 empower local authorities to enact by-laws for regulating all activities within their areas of jurisdiction. Accordingly, KCCA formerly KCC enacted five ordinances of 2006 (Urban Agriculture, Livestock and Companion Animals, Milk, Meat), which provide for the licensing, control and regulation of crop and livestock production activities in the city.

The changing policy environment is having an effect on official attitudes towards urban agriculture in Kampala city. Currently, there is official recognition and support to urban agriculture from government programmes and city authorities. The city now has a section known as the Urban Agriculture Unit, which was established within the city’s Department of Production and Marketing. Its broad responsibility is to support and guide urban farmers and to ensure household nutrition and food security. Government programmes under the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), particularly the National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS) programme no longer have rural areas as the only target areas for agricultural development. NAADS is a Government programme for agricultural development in the country. The programme has mainstreamed urban agriculture in its implementation framework and has rolled out its program activities in Kampala. Currently, Kampala city has an Agricultural Advisory Services Officer who is in charge of the NAADS programme in the city. Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) is also in the process of formulating a National Urban Agriculture Policy. The Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP) of MAAIF (2010) also provides an opportunity for the consideration of urban agriculture. The strategy aims at transforming subsistence farming to commercial agriculture” and has recognized and included urban agriculture into investment strategies.

## 17.5 Conclusions

Kampala city has been experiencing increases in the price of basic food commodities since 2002, with the sharpest increase during the period of 2007–2011. Major factors that have contributed to this trend include rapid growth in the demand for food as a result of the high urban population growth, drought effects, rising fuel prices and the declining value of the Uganda shilling. This has led to many city dwellers finding it difficult to meet minimum food requirements. The costly food supply and the high demand for food due to the high urban population have led to an increase in urban agriculture in Kampala city. Based on the positive contribution of urban agriculture to the general food basket of the city, the city authority has now changed its legal and administrative framework towards more enabling regulations to urban agriculture.

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