

Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity

City profile: Kampala, Uganda



Population: 1,680,600 (2020)

GDP per capita: \$2,655 (2017)

Major industries: services, trade, construction

Percent migrant: 17.8% (2020)

Mayor name: Erias Lukwago | **Next election date:** 2021

Socioeconomic profile

According to the latest data, released in 2020, Kampala is home to 1,680,600 people, 4% of the population of Uganda (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The city, originally designed to host 300,000 people, has expanded rapidly over the past 40 years, with planning functions and infrastructure struggling to keep pace (UN Habitat, 2016). The city swells considerably due to the influx of commuters, bringing the urban population to around 4.5 million during the day (KCCA, 2014). The population growth rate is very high, estimated at 3.9% (ibid.). The city sits at the heart of the larger Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area, which is home to around 3 million people, projected to grow to around 5 million over the next decade (KCCA, n.d.). The increase in the population of Kampala has been associated with very high traffic congestion, growing informal settlements, significant challenges delivering amenities and public services, and weak job creation in the face of the city's growing population.

Kampala, along with the wider South Central region, is the most productive area of Uganda. Its GDP per capita of \$2,655 is far above the national average (\$580) and makes up around 22.5% of the country's GDP (USAID and Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, 2017). In Kampala, the majority of those employed work in the services sector and in sales (46%), and around 15% work in the construction industry (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Kampala has the highest rate of unemployment of all sub-regions, with 21% of the labour force recorded as unemployed in the 2016/17 national household survey (ibid.). This was a decline on earlier years. Kampala also has a youthful population, with 46% of residents aged under 20 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Unemployment rates are highest among young people. In 2016/17, 2.6% of Kampala's residents were recorded as falling below the national poverty line (compared

with 21.4% nationally), an increase on the 0.7% recorded in 2012/13 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2018). As well as experiencing much lower poverty rates, urban residents have much better access to basic amenities, with 86% of the population accessing grid electricity compared with only 22% nationally (ibid.).

Migration profile

Uganda hosts a much higher proportion of refugees and other migrants relative to its population than other countries in sub-Saharan Africa.¹ This follows an unprecedented rise in numbers over the past decade due to renewed conflict in South Sudan and, more recently, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Most of Uganda's refugees live in rural settlements, often in its poorer northern districts, where they are provided with services and allocated plots of land to farm as part of the government's efforts to encourage refugee self-reliance. While data on refugees living in rural areas is available, there is an acknowledged lack of information about urban migrants and refugees. It is estimated that, in total, around 300,000 migrants may be living in Kampala, implying a migrant population of around 17.8% in the city (ODI City Contact Interview, 2020). UNHCR has estimated that there are just over 80,000 refugees in the city (UNHCR, 2020). The two largest refugee populations in the capital are from the DRC and Somalia (Montleith and Lwasa, 2017).

Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) has attempted to fill perceived gaps in the national policy response by taking on a strong leadership role in the city's urban response in relation to migrants and refugees. KCCA has convened inter-agency symposiums to better understand gaps in support for urban refugees, while also being vocal about the need for improved data on migrants' skills, to support labour market integration (ACMS and Samuel Hall, 2018). Some refugees have managed to establish businesses, such as Congolese

¹ In 2019, the country hosted over 1.7 million refugees and other migrants, around 3.9% of the population and much higher than the average for sub-Saharan Africa. See ODI (2020).

traders of kitenge and Somali cosmetics traders (Montleith and Lwasa, 2017). Labour market integration is enabled by the country's progressive approach, which allows refugees to move and work freely, own land and property and start businesses.

Governance structure

KCCA, the city's governing body, was created in 2010, when Kampala ceased being administered by local government. KCCA is a central government agency responsible for management, administration and service delivery in the city. This governance shift was made in recognition of the deteriorating state of the city's infrastructure and services, and the need for transformed leadership and investment. KCCA consists of the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor, one councillor to represent each electoral area of the capital city and additional councillors to represent youth, people with disabilities and professional bodies.² The Lord Mayor

is the political head of KCCA and leads the Authority in developing strategies and programmes for the development of the city, as well as representing KCCA on the Metropolitan Authority.

Current government policy aims to redevelop urban centres and satellite towns near Kampala, in order to ease the pressure on the capital, at the same time as investing in the renewal of Kampala itself. Priorities proposed in KCCA's physical development plan for the city include extension of the central business district, a comprehensive transportation system, the development of urban parks and cultural and recreational activities, the improvement of drainage, sewage, water and electricity supply and the development of new housing, including more affordable housing (KCCA, n.d.). Although KCCA is able to collect its own revenue from local business taxes, licences and fees, it is still heavily dependent on central government financing for ongoing investment in the city's development.

2 These are the Uganda Institution of Professional Engineers, Uganda Society of Architects, Uganda Medical Association and the Uganda Law Society.

References

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