

Joint Work Programme for Equitable Economic Growth in Cities

Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

Hosted by:  **UNOPS**



Figure 1:
Campaign Cities map



Campaign City Brief

Gulu, Uganda

Urbanisation rate
(district-level data)¹

34%

Average annual urban
population growth
(between 2002—2014)²

2.2%

District urban GDP³

\$89m

People with access to
piped water (district-
level data)⁴

21%

A recognition of the importance of equitable economic growth (EEG), and the need to understand how EEG can be effectively promoted in secondary cities, led to the establishment of Cities Alliance's Joint Work Programme (JWP) on EEG in cities.

A trademark component of the JWP-EEG programme has been the Campaign Cities Initiative (2016–2020). This initiative began by creating local partnerships in eight secondary cities in Bangladesh, Uganda, Ghana, and Kenya. For each city, a diagnostic assessment of constraints to EEG was produced, resulting in the selection of a particular public good or service in the city that should be prioritised.

In Uganda, the Campaign Cities Initiative was implemented by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) from June 2017 to August 2019.

The initiative assisted the secondary cities of Gulu and Mbale (Figure 1) prepare evidence-based policy recommendations concerning how municipal public goods and services could be delivered in a manner that directly contributes to EEG. The focus was on the use of public spaces, and improvements in land management that would support livelihood activities and address local economic development needs.

Gulu context

The urban sector of Uganda is rapidly growing, driven by high fertility rates, rural-urban migration and land use reclassification.⁵

Gulu is one of Uganda's fastest growing secondary cities. Gulu Municipality with a population of over 150,000 is the largest metropolis in the northern region of Uganda. It is the commercial and administrative centre of Gulu District and a hub for education, culture, regional trade and commerce for the greater Acholi region.

Gulu faces a range of development challenges associated with rapid, unplanned and uncoordinated urbanisation that has often left segments of their population, marginalised and vulnerable, and unable to access basic public goods and services.⁶

Increasing importance is attached to improving the delivery and management of public spaces and other municipal assets such as land in a way that promotes EEG.⁷ Streets, sidewalks, markets, squares and parks that are accessible, safe and inclusive are part of the basic infrastructure that is key to the productivity and wellbeing of workers and to both formal and informal businesses alike, as they are primary sites of economic, social and cultural exchange.⁸ Over 40% of the businesses in Gulu operate on the street and open spaces.⁹

Approach and methodology

Each Campaign City initiative took around 24 months to complete, and consisted of the establishment of a City Level Partnership (CLP), followed by the preparation of three consecutive reports and associated workshops:

1. Establishment of a City-Level Partnership (CLP):

The Campaign City process began by establishing a CLP that used existing local multi-stakeholder fora. The CLP consisted of representatives from local government, chambers of commerce, the informal economy and the broader community, as well as the JWP facilitator. Members of the CLP debated issues and were responsible for the preparing the reports throughout the process.

2. Preparation of an Institutional Enabling Environment Report (IEER):

A description of the institutional parameters under which the Gulu Municipality operates was presented in the IEER.

3. Preparation of a Local Assessment Report (LAR):

Based on the outcome of a workshop reviewing the IEER, the CLP identified one priority area of intervention to be further explored within the LAR: the use of public spaces and related improvements in land management. An inventory of public spaces and an analyses of land management mechanisms were completed. An examination was undertaken of the challenges and opportunities related to the way in which various stakeholder access public space and land assets. Recommendations were made concerning how the city administrations could improve the provision and management of public services in a manner that promotes EEG.

4. Policy Briefs and the Recommendations:

Two respective Policy Briefs and Recommendations were then prepared based on the recommendations of the stakeholders.

The Campaign Cities initiative collaborated closely with the relevant municipal authorities and Municipal Development Forum (MDF), the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Local Government, the Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU) and other relevant government and non-government stakeholders, as well as with the JWP members in Uganda including Cities Alliance, DFID, the World Bank and GIZ.





Findings

The IEER and LAR found that public land and spaces in Gulu are scarce, amounting to no more than 0.85 hectares for every 1,000 municipal residents.¹⁰ Moreover, the distribution of public spaces is spatially unequal, and what little there is suffers from lack of maintenance and poor governance and institutional oversight.¹¹

As urban areas expand, public spaces and land risk becoming re-allocated, or grabbed by individuals who fraudulently acquire land titles and then sell them off. It is a distressing reality of many municipalities across Uganda that their public spaces and land are shrinking and often disappearing altogether.¹²

The LAR highlighted a number of policy interventions that could significantly improve EEG, including:

- Supporting the Gulu municipality to develop public open spaces and manage urban lands in a manner which generates environmental, social and economic benefits; and
- Given the dwindling discretionary financing to municipalities in Uganda, assistance is required to develop alternative financing models for public service delivery and local economic development activities.

If implemented, these measures contribute to overcoming the existing bottlenecks in terms of public service delivery and regulation of public space and land.

The Government of Uganda has proposed that the provision and management of public spaces features in all development plans. The Directorate of Physical Planning and Urban Development in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development stresses that regulators and municipal governments should emphasize the designation of public spaces in all development plans before they are approved.

The Gulu Municipal Council Local Government Five Year Development Plan 2015/16–2019/20 accords limited attention to public spaces. The existing physical development plan for Gulu does not provide an inventory of public spaces in the two municipalities, do not identify the public agencies which would be responsible for public space, and lack clear and detailed protocols concerning the way in which public spaces are to be provided and managed.

This situation has led to disjointed land use programmes, resulting in conflicts, unbalanced development, uneconomical land use, land fragmentation, and destruction of fragile ecosystems.

Recommendations

The Campaign City policy briefs and consultations identified measures to promote public space and land management for EEG in Gulu:

- There is a need for the political leadership and the Mayor to **'champion' public space** for EEG. Highly visible mayoral support becomes an important assurance that the city's public space and land is secure.
- Effective management of public spaces and land must start with **adequate data and information**. Municipal properties, spaces and land need to be surveyed, registered and land titles issued to generate a complete municipal asset register and database.
- Public spaces and land should be **part of a broader Municipal Development Strategy**. Public spaces should be locked into the city's development process. Public space and land management plans must be realistic, comprehensive and integrated.
- There is a need to demonstrate **how public spaces meet wider development objectives**, such as education, health, safety, environment, and local economic development.
- **The institutional framework** that guides public space and land management needs to be revised to establish a clear regulatory framework to help in the alignment of land transactions that are consistent with the municipal physical development plans.
- **Regulate and invest in public space** for business development. Institute effective regulation for vending business through issuance of vendor permits and providing space.
- Identify **creative and innovative ways of financing** the management of public spaces and land. This can be through partnerships, collaborations and joint ventures with the private sector. For example, engage private sector to develop PPP-based markets in areas where the municipalities are unable to gazette markets due to tenure challenges.
- **Land value capture and land banking** are tools that cities could adopt to capture private values generated by better public spaces to sustain investment in public space.
- There is a need to **build the capacity** of the municipality both human and financial to carry out their responsibilities effectively for equitable provision of services for all urban residents in view of the planned future growth.

Endnotes

- 1 Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016, The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Main Report, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/wphc/Uganda/UGA-2016-05-23.pdf>
- 2 <http://citypopulation.de/Uganda-Cities.html>
- 3 Wang, Xuantong, Rafa, Mickey, Moyer, Jonathan D., et. al., 2019, "Estimation and Mapping of Sub-National GDP in Uganda Using NPP-VIIRS Imagery", Remote Sensing 11, no. 163: 10
- 4 Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2017, The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Area Specific Profile Series: Gulu, <https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/2014CensusProfiles/GULU.pdf>
- 5 World Bank. 2015. The growth challenge: Can Ugandan cities get to work? Washington, DC: World Bank Group.
- 6 Roberts, B. H. 2014. Managing Systems of Secondary Cities, Brussels: Cities Alliance/UNOPS.
- 7 Chen, Martha with Jenna Harvey, Caroline Wanjiku Kihato and Caroline Skinner. 2018. Inclusive Public Spaces for Informal Livelihoods: A Discussion Paper for Urban Planners and Policy Makers. Prepared by WIEGO for the Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme for Equitable Economic Growth in Cities. Manchester, UK: WIEGO.
- 8 Cities Alliance. 2018. A Policy Dialogue of the Joint Work Programme on Fostering Equitable Economic Growth in Cities at the 9th Session of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 7-13. February 2018.
- 9 Cities Alliance. 2018. Local Economic Development for Equitable Growth in Gulu, Uganda. Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme for Equitable Economic Growth in Cities. March 2018.
- 10 Paul, I. Mukwaya, Denis Tugume, and Peter Kasajja, Laura Adoch, Sarah Apio. 2017. Evidence Policy Making for Public Space and Land Management in Gulu Municipality. Prepared for the Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme for Equitable Economic Growth in Cities.
- 11 UNCDF. 2017. Institutional Enabling Environment Report. Local Economic Development for Equitable Growth in Gulu, Uganda.
- 12 Mukwaya, I. P., Wegulo, P., Tugume, D., and Kasajja, P. (2018). Urban Public Space and Land Management: Local Assessment for Equitable Growth in Gulu Municipality, Uganda.