

**GENDER AND COPING STRATEGIES FOR ACCESS TO LAND FOR  
URBAN AGRICULTURE IN KAMPALA CITY, UGANDA**

BY

Juliet Kiguli, Ph.D.

Department of Social Anthropology

Institute of Languages

Makerere University

P.O.Box 7062

Kampala, Uganda

E-mail: [jkiguli2002@yahoo.com](mailto:jkiguli2002@yahoo.com)

Tel: +256-71-951039

**WORKSHOP ON GENDER AND URBAN AGRICULTURE TO BE  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

This case study reflects on the importance of urban agriculture in Kampala City, which area policy makers and authorities have neglected yet it has a direct bearing on the economy. Urban agriculture ensures food security to city dwellers. It is also a thriving livelihood which empowers both women and men, especially those in poor households. Many retrenched or retired civil servants and other unemployed persons as a result of structural adjustment programme impact in the 1980s perceive it as a form of social security and pension. Also, conventional science based research and extension services focussing on modern agriculture target only the rural households, leaving out the city. Still, socio-management of land is ignored, although it affects agricultural productivity. The case study looks at land which is a vital resource to practising agricultural activities. It spell outs the patriarchal tenure relations which affect women, who are the majority of urban farmers and make them lack access to land and ownership rights. Ultimately, people lack productive and household assets, which leads to urban poverty. So urban poverty is indicated as an urgent issue to be addressed and realised as many policies and development work focus on the rural areas yet rural - urban migration influx is high and continues to perplex modernisation in the city.

### **Background**

The research project aimed at fulfilling the information gaps that exist in understanding gendered urban land access relations, how these affect urban agriculture, and the avenues for improvement of access to land for such agriculture to benefit the poor.<sup>1</sup> This case study is derived from a research project on improving access to land for the urban poor. It is a component setting out to understand gender relations and formal/informal access to land for urban agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> The poor live in mud and wattle or unburnt brick houses and earn less than US\$ 1 per day.

Farming areas were selected from Kampala City, which is also a District. The major premise was to understand how farmers, who are mostly women, access land for farming and other agricultural activities. What is evident is the engulfing state of urban poverty and finding coping strategies in access to and control over natural resources like land. For historically, agriculture is the mainstay of the Ugandan economy and land issues pertaining to Kampala City and District have been known to be thorny and explosive.

The research project took place in Kampala City. It was limited to the analysis of the political economy of urban agriculture and accessibility to land for agriculture by the poor. It was selected due to the fact that a previous study by Maxwell and Zziwa (1992) indicated that urban agriculture was making a significant contribution to the municipal economy. It contributed 60% of the urban food household basket as well as providing employment to the people. Likewise, 70% of the poultry consumed in Kampala is raised within the city. It was further established that global warming is taking place and there is emphatic advocacy for greener cities and environmental management (World Bank 2000). Observation of City farming areas and consultation with the Kampala City Council agricultural unit indicates food crop cultivation, animal keeping, agro-forestry and flower gardening as increasingly happening. An examination of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which is the main development strategy and planning framework for fighting poverty shows that agriculture is creating an enabling environment for the poor to raise their incomes and harmonise with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For instance, MDG number one targets reduction of extreme poverty and hunger.

### **Research Team**

The research was carried out by a group of Ugandan researchers from various institutions. It was a collaborative research managed by the Municipal

Development Programme (MDP) based in Harare and funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, and Ugandan research associates based at Makerere Institute of Social Research. The Ugandan research team comprised of various categories of professions. These included urban planners, urban geographers, gender specialists and social scientists.

### **Characteristics of the Study Area**

Kampala is built on several hills surrounded by swamps. It belongs to the wetland pen plain, which is a typical lake plateau. Most of the poor people reside in wetlands and on the fringes of Lake Victoria. It is the only urban district out of the 56 districts in Uganda after the implementation of a decentralisation policy. It lies between 0.15 to 0.44° North and 32.30 to 32.63° East. It covers 195 Km<sup>2</sup> with population which has grown from 330,700 (1969) to 1,208,544 (2002). It is divided into five administrative divisions, 2-3 of which have major agricultural activities (e.g., Kyanja, Komaboga, Gaba etc.).

**Table 1: Statistics of Kampala District/City**

Population	Estimated at 1.5M out of the country's 24.7 M
Population growth rate (per cent)	7% as compared to country's 3.4%
Life expectancy	43 years
Persons per square km	7051.8 compared to Uganda's 102 persons per Km <sup>2</sup>
GDP per capita	\$330 (by 2003)
Level of unemployment	31%
Area	195 Km <sup>2</sup> (land area =169 Km <sup>2</sup> )
Wetlands	3.6%

Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) Household Survey 2003

Uganda Human Development Report (UNDP) 2002

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2003

Its soils are ferrallic representing an almost final stage of weathering known as red loamy soils while the valleys have black alluvial lake soil deposits. It receives

a bimodal annual rainfall ranging from 1750 mm to 2000 mm, with the main peak in March to May and a minor one in September to November. January to February and June to August which are hot months of the year with temperatures rising up to 27<sup>o</sup> C.

## **STUDY OBJECTIVES**

### **Overall Objective**

To contribute to a better understanding of the most viable means of improving access to and use of land for urban agriculture specifically by the urban poor

### **Specific Objectives**

- a) To contribute to understanding of gender issues as regards access, control and utilisation of land.
- b) To document and analyse formal and informal practices, strategies and means used by socially and economically differentiated women and men to access land for urban agriculture
- c) To identify and analyse issues pertaining to land legislation that constrain or enhance practise of urban agriculture, particularly by the urban poor.

### **Techniques in implementation of the Study**

Several consultative meetings took place between MDP, IDRC representatives and the Ugandan research team. Purposive sampling was done whereby 2 parishes were selected from each division to capture pertinent features of urban agriculture and low income residents. Lists were availed by the local council leaders of each village and respondents selected using simple random sampling. There were 43 men (21%) and 162 (79%) women, altogether 205 respondents.

### **Field Methods**

Several methods were used in the collection of data for this study.

- **Gender analysis** was used to explore roles, responsibilities, allocation of labour time, social status, constraints and choices for men and women. For example, it involved looking at the division of labour and comparing tasks of men and women in farming households, including reproductive roles. In Gaba landing site, while women were mainly involved in farming of food crops, child care and fish processing, men were engaged in fishing, mending nets and other employment. In preference of crop farming, women preferred fruit trees, food crops and other softwood species for fuel while men held interest in hardwood tree species to make furniture and cash crops for sale. On the whole, gender was the critical variable and gender analysis entailed an understanding of different activities of women/girls and men/boys, relations between them and patterns of women and men's access to and control over resources like land.
- **Participatory appraisal** was used for example, in identifying obstacles to urban agriculture. The principal idea was that research remained open to new perspectives and insights into why urban agriculture problems arise and persist and how the poor access land for urban agriculture. Transect walks, daily activity plans, wealth ranking and mapping were useful in understanding or prioritizing research issues. They aimed at identifying agricultural activities, farming conditions and interview people about local concerns. Wealth ranking through households helped indicate locally defined criteria of being poor in the community and highlight the vulnerability of households with low incomes to floods and job losses.
- **Focus group discussions** were used to compliment and verify results of the questionnaire survey.
- **Interviews** were used to collect primary data from farming and non-farming households and particularly from participants of urban agricultural activities.
- **Stakeholder analysis** was used to identify different interest groups in urban agriculture including beneficiaries or groups that were positively or negatively affected by urban agriculture activities.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF URBAN AGRICULTURE**

In Kampala, agriculture is an activity that produces, processes and markets food and other products derived out of land and water in both urban and peri-urban areas. The commonest type of farming is subsistence mixed farming. Many farmers are involved in crop, livestock keeping, pig rearing and fish farming. 79% of the farming population is involved in crop production, 12% in poultry, 6% dairy or zero grazing, 1% rabbit keeping, 2% goat/pig rearing, and 1% other enterprises like upland rice, mushrooms and aquaculture. The practices are undertaken by two categories of people namely:

- a) traditional farmers with large tracts of land in the peri-urban areas who were engulfed by urban development and city expansion, and;
- b) migrants from rural areas in search of employment and other social related benefits.

Over 40% of the households are engaged in some form of urban agricultural activity. 56.1% (11, 942 hectares) land is under agriculture (Nuwagaba and Atukunda 2001: 27). 70% have backyard gardens or roadside farms of less than one acre. 5% have 5 acres, 2% are institutions like schools, 10 % have 2-3 acres and 13% have none. Urban agriculture is a land use located in open spaces. It occurs on large tracts of private and public land that remains underdeveloped and is for landscaping, future urban expansion or wetlands.

### **Benefits from Urban Agriculture**

It supplements household incomes and provides employment (over 1/2 of the households within the city generate some income from agriculture). It contributes to the recycling of domestic household waste (approximately 20% of the households recycle and utilise biodegradable domestic waste into compost and livestock feed). It benefits from the reuse of human urine and faecal material generated from ecological sanitation projects implemented in Kampala (costing US\$ 1million provided by SIDA, a Swedish Agency and others).

## **GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR IN THE HOUSEHOLDS**

Roles and responsibilities are shared differently by both men and women in urban agriculture. One must note that different activities are done at different levels by different sexes. Differences exist in division of tasks between sexes within the households practising agriculture in the urban setting from those in the rural areas. While women constitute a large proportion of those in the home during office hours in the study area, jobless men seem to be away from home in search of petty trading and other informal sector work. Urban men are normally interested in work accompanied with highly monetary benefits or general improvement in household income. A picture emerges from the interview accounts that females are responsible for the chores in the home and food production while the men ensure economic security by providing money to cater for other items like meat, clothes and school fees.

In Kampala, women and children plant, weed and harvest while men market the produce, although not necessarily. For example, women sell the cocoyam (known as a cash crop) among urban farmers whereas men mostly do manual labour. In this case, urban farming has many men as casual labourers to middle income households. It is also important to realise that most farms in Kampala are female headed. Still, some poor women work as casual labourers for wages because they do not own land and need money to meet basic needs. Men prefer to keep animals while women prefer to grow vegetables and other food crops on the farms. Any crops such as tomatoes in the city, which fetch high income, may be labelled as cash crops yet it differs in the rural areas. It is markedly important to keep in mind that such crops tend to be handled by men although women may play a significant role in their production. Women have formed groups and own zero grazing cows or keep goats. The boys tend to look after the rabbits and provide feeds to poultry while girls assist their mothers.



Women spend 12-16 hours everyday contributing to household chores like cooking, weaving mats, attending funerals and farming activities unlike the men. Men are involved in opening up new farming ground and cutting down the papyrus in the wetlands while using their leisure hours to engage in conversation at the drinking places. Men spend 4-8 hours everyday in the fields and other household related activities. The female headed households are more disadvantaged compared to the male headed households because they lack two adults to contribute to the tasks. Such female headed households often hire labour to clear the land but they take up both the masculine roles of income earning and feminine ones like providing food to household members.

### **ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES**

Kigula (2003:97) says that among other factors such as lack of information and the patriarchal land tenure relations which deny the majority of women land ownership rights, may be major prohibitive factors for innovations and development. He argues that while the state laws<sup>2</sup> may not deny women ownership and access rights, culture and indigenous land tenure relations have afforded women none or limited land tenure rights.

Most of the women interviewed had primary education or none at all. Only a few had secondary education. This determined work done and explained why poverty was a great problem among females, since few of them are in the formal sector and many stay at home as housewives, farmers in the backyards or carry out petty trade in foodstuffs in evening candlelight markets by the roadsides. Thus, this makes them susceptible to poverty resulting into poor standards of living and exploitation of land resources, which leads to land degradation.

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<sup>2</sup> The 1995 Constitution of Uganda states that, "Every person has a right to own property either individually or in association with others" (Article 26 (1)). The Land Act, 1998 states that any decision taken in respect of land held under customary tenure which denies women access to ownership, occupation or use of any land shall be null and void" (Section.28)..

Acquisition of land strongly influences land use. Using the questionnaire method, the respondents said that land was acquired and accessed through borrowing, renting, squatting and inheritance (see Table 2). A few others said they had purchased land or received it as donations or gifts. Women mentioned co-ownership as a means to accessing land, although much of the land was acquired through squatting by identifying unoccupied land in low lying areas. Here, they farmed land which belonged to absentee landlords. Most of the squatters were mainly found on mailo tenure system which encouraged high land fragmentation and permitted the separation of ownership of land from ownership of developments on the land made by bonafide occupancy.

**Table 2: Land Acquisition by Gender**

	Borrowing	Renting	Inheritance	squatting	Co-ownership	Total
Male	39.1	13	4.3	43.5	-	100
Female	32.4	2.8	12.3	46.5	56	100

Majority of farmers are squatters on mailo land. However, one must note that the 1995 Uganda Constitution and Land Act 1998 cater for access and ownership but do not take into consideration land utilisation. Therefore, ignoring the fact that land use is important to any activity occurring on a natural resource like land. Table 3 points out access to land and type of tenure by gender. It illustrates the point of occupation of tenure in Kampala as leasehold, mailoland, public land, customary and freehold hold.<sup>3</sup> It shows women as having access to land and majority as farmers (68%) on mailoland.

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<sup>3</sup> Mailo tenure originates from the English word 'mile' and is unique to Kampala area, having its origins in the 1900 Land Agreement signed between the Buganda Kingdom and British Colonial government,, whereby land was bequeathed to the king, royal family, chiefs and other notables as private property in perpetuity while the rest of land became crown (public) land belonging to the queen of England. Freehold tenure was land held by the British administration in perpetuity and utilised for developments like schools, missions, hospitals and other institutions. Customary tenure was land held by clans in communal form of ownership and regulated by customary law. Leasehold was land granted by government and individuals as official estates, whereby one party grants to another rights to exclusive possession of the land for a specified period, for money or rent.

**Table3: Access to land for Agriculture and Type of Tenure**

	Freehold land	Mailo land	Public land	Customary land
Male	5.6%	32%	30.8%	25%
Female	94.4%	68%	69.2%	75%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

### **Decision making at the household and Community levels**

In male-headed households, men determine which size of land to access for farming and type of crops to be grown. Women generally do not hold titles to land.<sup>4</sup> They are prevented from having a voice in stating their needs due to ethnic background and tradition. For example, some cultural practices state that women do not speak in public (e.g., among the Baganda). Women are perceived as mothers of the nation and largely expected to perform in the domestic sphere while men serve in the public sphere. Similarly, other ethnic groups in the study area share common cultural strands with the Baganda. For among the Banyankole and Iteso, livestock is significant as land and men inherit or have a say in disposing of it. It is the men who control the major source of household income and determine how to use it. The men purchase the farm inputs and equipment like hoes and pangas. It is they who have a strong hold on the household budget and allocate a certain amount of money to women, who in turn decide on household expenditure priorities. One woman explained:

*You grow the crops but when it comes to selling, it is your husband or male relative who sells and decides on how to spend the money. If you complain, he asks you if you are the one who owns the land. He then goes to spend the money on local brew. (Focus group discussion, Kigobe zone, Rubaga Division, Kampala, 2003).*

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<sup>4</sup> Norms and attitudes guide traditional inheritance systems, and land remains the most important property that is passed on from one generation to another. For marriage is patrilocal and property like land is inherited through patrilineal arrangements, whereby when a man dies, his son or nearest male kin (in case of having born only daughters) inherits the land and use rights. If he wants to sell, he has to consult elders or clan heads because land is held in trustee for the next generation of sons. The daughters have only usufruct rights unlike their brothers.

Within the community, it is the elders and local authorities permitting accessibility and ownership. These happen to be men because land is passed on to sons or nearest male relative as the in-charge of any parcel of land left by a deceased member of the family.<sup>5</sup> In addition, local councils administer all villages/wards. Here, all posts are open to women but one finds only one woman on the committee because of the defined position of secretary for women while men occupy the other seats. So decision making at the community level is perceived and treated as a man's role. To sell land or resolve a land conflict, permission must be sought from the local council leaders and as majority are men, they tend to favour their own sex.

### **GENDER OPPORTUNITIES AND DIFFERENTIATED CONSTRAINTS**

There are increasingly many micro-finance schemes in Kampala, but male chauvinism and lack of collateral denies women access to credit.<sup>6</sup> Some husbands do not allow their wives to carry out wide viable projects. As such poverty is knocking at the door, and women cannot generate their own incomes. For women urban farmers interpreted access to income (credit) as a form of empowerment that in the long run would allow them purchasing power over land and enable them to carry out profitable activities.

Lack of improved farm technology and more appropriate land tenure policies have led to land degradation and low farm output. Likewise, women have small farm holdings and use compost/animal manure because they have not got enough money to buy artificial fertilisers. Also landlords bar them from using any type of compost on the plots claiming they would soon repossess their lands for development. Landlords also prevent squatters from growing perennial

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However, most people are not aware of the Land Act 1998 which lays legal action for succession and land inheritance. Still, the succession Act is gender biased and favours men.

<sup>5</sup> See Succession Act, Chapter 139 Laws of Uganda. This bears characteristics of male dominance in Ugandan society and emphasises culturally determined succession practices which defranchise women (Kigula 2003:98).

<sup>6</sup> During the fieldwork, respondents mentioned Faulu, Pride Africa, World Bank and their own women social support network groups which lent out money.

crops like *Moringa Oleifera*, oranges and coffee because these have a long growth period and create permanent occupation on the land which may also signify permanent use rights on borrowed or rented land.

Although Kampala City Council has extension services, the Plan for Modernisation (PMA)<sup>7</sup> focuses on rural districts. Poor urban women farmers have limited contact to extension workers because male extension workers tend to target male farmers or people with high incomes. Much as Kampala is cosmopolitan, there are still traces of cultural inhibitors. Some men do not allow their wives to speak directly to other men.

Lack of land ownership increases women's mobility as they search for empty open spaces to farm. Women have to take their children along to the far away farms or arrange with a kind neighbour to watch over the very young ones.

Whatever increase in agricultural production is achieved, is through expanding of area under cultivation rather than intensifying farming methods. In extending the agricultural frontier, farmers are encroaching on the wetlands and garbage areas. Still, the low levels of household incomes that practise urban agriculture portray the low land productivity. There is no documentation done on the practices to keep agriculture in balance with economic and ecological conditions to make farming more productive and sustainable.

Kampala has major recurrent flooding during the heavy rains in the city causing several flood spots in the informal settlements e.g., Kinawataka, Namuwongo and Banda, which causes economic loss as gardens and houses are draped in water and there are associated environmental health risks.

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<sup>7</sup> The Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture was developed as a key pillar for the PEAP, aiming at eradicating poverty by improving the natural resource based livelihoods of the rural poor in a sustainable manner.. Its vision is poverty eradication through a profitable, competitive, sustainable and dynamic agricultural and agricultural industrial sector (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) 2000, p.vi).

## **STRATEGIES TO BE APPLIED IN LOCAL POLICIES AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS TO ENHANCE GENDER EQUITY IN URBAN AGRICULTURE**

This section describes coping strategies, beginning with the national level and illustrates others at the local level.

### **Key Policy Areas for Action at the National Level**

Although the Government of Uganda in collaboration with the Ministry of Water, Lands and the Environment (MWLE) are currently in the process of developing a land policy, none on agriculture exists. Therefore, government should develop an agricultural policy and integrate it into national development frameworks and city management. Still, specific policies on urban agriculture are needed to improve the participation of the poor women and men by increasing their access to credit, land and information needs.

The Government of Uganda has on several occasions been praised for its commitment to universal primary education, which started in 1997 and adult literacy programmes.<sup>8</sup> The primary school curriculum and adult literacy programmes should incorporate urban agriculture and PMA as the channel for agricultural advisory services.

Reflecting on urban poverty and the Millennium development goals (MDGs), Uganda has been trying to domesticate and contextualise the goals. In this particular case, attention should be drawn towards MDG goal one which looks at eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, goal 3 of promoting gender equality and empower women and goal 7 to ensure environmental sustainability by considering a green city advocacy. It is the intention of PEAP, which was born out of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) to galvanise the poor and

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<sup>8</sup> UPE saw primary school enrolment figures increase from 3.4 million in 1996 to 6.9 million in 1999. In 2002, total enrolment was 7.3 million (Millennium Development Goal report 2003, p.10)

empower them to bring about development. For urban poverty is a development obstacle.

There is need to assess and know the contribution of urban farming to household food requirements. Urban agriculture is not yet visualised as important by government officials. This is because some people hold negative beliefs on having animals and food crops in the city as against modernisation of the city. They perceive industrialisation and modernisation as indicators of urbanisation, economic growth and development. At the same time, they believe urban agriculture is the importation of rural behaviours by rural - urban migrants into the city. There is great need for sensitisation programmes on urban agriculture to the greater population while emphasising the importance of a green environment. (Note that draft guidelines and Kampala City urban agriculture ordinances to legalise farming are underway by the Ministry of Justice).

### **Integration of policy into the Local Situation**

In Kampala, there is need to reduce on environment - related conflict and urban agriculture through the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) by advocacy. It has been envisaged that poor women grow cocoyam in swamps/wetlands and are oft evicted by NEMA on the precondition that cocoyams have been infected by pathogens and harmful industrial materials e.g., Lead which lead to poor environmental health because wetlands act as filters of raw sewer in Kampala. For instance, there is massive encroachment on Kinawataka swamp and Nakivubo channel/swamp in Namuwongo B village of Wabigalo parish, Makindye division.

Empower civil society (through community-based organisations), in particular poor and marginalised urban farmers so that they have a voice in the development of agricultural policies through bottom up consultations. For

resource rights are part of human rights and can be strengthened by reforming land acts and policies. For the Land Act 1998 (Amendment 2004) and the Domestic Relations Bill talking about co-spouse ownership have been amended to focus on land rights for women. Women feel this is a step towards achieving women land rights.

**Understanding Gender issues as regards Access, Control and utilisation of land for Urban Agriculture.**

- Create gender awareness of male and female differences in resource allocation and utilisation, by lobbying and advocacy through women's groups in order to change the negative cultural attitudes towards women and ownership of land. Cultural perceptions of land and money as only belonging to men must cease. For the United Nations reiterates the mandate of gender mainstreaming as a policy making strategy for gender equality to help guarantee that both men and women are at the centre of development (see World Bank 2001).
- Gender sensitisation of the agricultural programmes and policies, with specific consideration of women as important urban farmers and contributors to food security and the economy. For nothing specific is mentioned about the diversity of target groups to be reached by extension services, although it is stated that they should address issues that are relevant to poor farmers such as lack of markets and storage facilities.
- Ensure temporary measures e.g., introduce transitional zones which can be accessed by women urban farmers. There is need to create land banking whereby government and Kampala city council can purchase land from private landlords and allocate it to urban farmers who are the vulnerable poor. Land transfers to women farmers and poor men can reduce poverty.
- Encourage women to engage in programmes that can enhance their earning capacity. Helper relations among women drawing on neighbourhood and men with friends can provide group labour. This can lead to enhancement of



small farm productivity and reduce labour hours. Similarly, women play an important role in social relations/friendship cultivation by borrowing farm equipment like hoes and sharing foodstuffs.

### **AN OUTLOOK INTO THE FUTURE**

All cities must however be based on physical planning, policies that allow for orderly urban development and modernisation. The question one is likely to ask is: "isn't urban agriculture a fetter to regularisation of urban development?" We are aware of this and that urban agriculture is a necessity and also a reality and therefore, it should be encouraged but in such a way that it will permit the conventional courses of urban planning and development to take place. It is important to know that urban agriculture in Kampala is transitional in nature in urban areas, but in the interim it should be tolerated and made good, too. It does ensure food security, contributes and supplements the household incomes and provides employment to women. In a developing country like Uganda, there is no unemployment scheme for farmers, more and more people have to depend on their own initiative and resourcefulness to make a living. For industrialisation is still at an embryonic stage and poverty is swelling as unemployment lingers on.

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