

IMPACT OF RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION ON DEVELOPMENT IN KIGALI

Canisius Gakwandi¹

Context: Poor, unproductive land, few employment opportunities, and the need to survive often lead to the breakup of rural communities. Those who can, head for the towns and cities to look for work. The number of people living and working in the cities in the world is rapidly increasing. In 2008 more than half its human population, 3, 3 billion people, will be living in urban areas. By 2030 the towns and cities of developing world will make up 81 percent of urban humanity.

In Rwanda, like any other developing country, there is ample evidence to suggest that the level of urbanization is increasing. The urban population represents 16% of the total population of Rwanda. The rate urban population growth is around 7% in Kigali.

Approximately 11.5% of Rwandan households are without land. About 55% of agricultural holdings are on less than 0.5 of a hectare. An estimated 21% of rural households hold between 0.5 and one hectare, and 12% of rural households hold between one and 1.5 hectares. Only 6.5% of rural households hold more than two hectares of land, by 2020 the present population of 8.1 million is projected to double to 16 million; this could reduce by half the already tiny plot sizes that average 0.6 hectare per household, as well as increase the number of households which hold no land at all. With a population density rate of 322 persons/km², the availability of land is among the country's chief constraints. Hence migration has become an important livelihood strategy for many poor groups in Rwanda. Consequently Kigali City is currently battling the pressure of rapid population increase, making it difficult for the city to accommodate the rapidly growing population and provide housing, urban services and employment opportunities. An estimated one million people share 722.3 square kilometers of land.

Methodology: refereed to secondary data (census and journal articles), which depict aspects in recent pressure of rapid population in Kigali city. Despite the government efforts in response to this problem, by launching an integrated massive low cost housing program for the middle and low-income families, and the fact that this program has brought a remarkable change in the image of the city, improving the way of life of city dwellers, majority of the population is living in informally developed housing, often of poor conditions including street residents. The rapid growth urbanization has caused the most deplorable living and environmental conditions within the city and is characterized by inadequate water supply, squalid conditions of environmental sanitation, overcrowded and, hazardous location, insecure tenure and vulnerability to serious health risks.

The paper argues that the low cost housing program has potential to reduce urban poverty and facilitate sustainable urbanization. It also concludes that the program has a lot to contribute to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and national vision 2020.

¹ MA Rural development, Sokoine University of Agriculture