

**SOCIAL NETWORKS AND URBAN SURVIVAL IN NABUTITI  
NEIGHBOURHOOD IN KANSANGA WARD IN  
KAMPALA CITY**

**BY**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents	Page
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	ii
DECLARATION.....	iv
APPROVAL.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	vii
DEFINITIONS OF TERMS.....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
 CHAPTER ONE.....	 1
BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	1
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	2
1.4 Specific objectives.....	2
1.5 Research questions.....	2
1.6 Significance of the study.....	2
1.7 Scope of the study.....	3
 CHAPTER TWO.....	 4
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
2.0 Introduction.....	4
2.1 Formation of social networks.....	4
2.3 Social networks and urban survival.....	5
2.3 Conclusion.....	6
 CHAPTER THREE.....	 7
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	7
3.1 Introduction.....	7
3.2 Description of the study area.....	7
3.3 Research design.....	7
3.4 Sampling techniques and sample size.....	7
3.4 Data collection.....	8
3.4.1 Interviews.....	8
3.4.3 Observations.....	9
3.6 Data analysis.....	9
3.7 Limitations of the study.....	10
 CHAPTER FOUR.....	 11
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	11
4.1 Introduction.....	11
4.2 Formation of social networks in Nabititi neighbourhood.....	11
4.2.1 Ethnicity, kinship, friendship and religion.....	11
4.2.2 Marriage alliances, gender and age.....	12

4.2.3. Shared workplace and shared schooling.....	13
4.3 Social networks and survival of the urban poor in Nabititi neighbourhood.....	13
4.3.1 Employment.....	13
4.3.2 Credit or small loan .....	14
4.3.3 Marriage.....	14
4.3.4 Shelter .....	15
4.3.5 Medical care.....	15
4.3.6 Feeding .....	15
CHAPTER FIVE .....	16
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS .....	16
5.1 Recommendations.....	16
5.2 Conclusions.....	17
REFERENCES .....	18
APPENDIX A.....	20
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....	20
APPENDIX B.....	21
OBSERVATION CHECKLIST .....	21

### DECLARATION


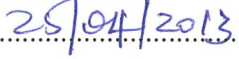
I Too David Kipyego B., declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted for the award of a degree, diploma or any other academic qualification in any other university, college or institution before.

Signature: ..... *K. David B.* ..... Date: ..... *25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2013* .....

**TOO DAVID KIPYEGO B**

### **APPROVAL**

This dissertation entitled 'social networks and urban survival in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga ward in Kampala City' was done under my supervision and has been submitted to the College of Education, Open and Distance Learning at Kampala International University for examination with my approval as the supervisor.

Signature.......... Date..........

**KAMULEGEYA SIRAJE**

### **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my wife Carolyne Too; my children Gertrude, Marion and Shelyn; and my dear parents Peter and Pauline.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

My sincere thanks and appreciation go to all those persons who made this study a reality. I am grateful to the academic staff of the College of Education, Open and Distance Learning of Kampala International University and the respondents who participated in the study. Thanks also go to my wife, children, parents and staff of Kamagap primary school who morally supported me throughout my education.

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**Social networks:** Social networks are relations that encompass relatives, tribe-mates, neighbours and friends to whom an individual or family is tied socially usually by shared values, attitudes, culture, education, religion and aspirations (Audrey, 2003:384; Johnston, et al., 1994:567). Such networks may be spatially concentrated as both cause and effect members choose to live in the same place as others in their network, thereby maximising the potential for interaction (Johnston, et al., 567).

**Neighbourhood:** A section lived in by people who consider themselves neighbours or a local community with characteristics that distinguish it from the areas around it.

**Ward:** An electoral or administrative division of an area such as a city, town or county.

**Survival:** Staying alive or the fact of remaining alive or in existence especially after facing life-threatening danger, destitution or severe economic hardship.

**Urban:** Relating to or typical of being a city, urban life or an urban area.



### **ABSTRACT**

The study was conducted to explore the importance of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti in Kansanga Ward. This was after the realisation that the liberalisation of the economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the rapid urbanisation of Kampala City had left tens of thousands of the city residents in squalid conditions where abject and absolute poverty rule with services going mainly to paying clients following the withdrawal of the state as the principal actor. The study specifically sought to achieve the following objectives: to establish the basis for formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood; and to explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti neighbourhood. To achieve the stated objectives, the study was guided by the following research questions: what is the basis for formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood? What is the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti neighbourhood?

The study design took the form of a case study of social networks and urban survival in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga ward in Kampala City. The study also involved purposive sampling in which the data sought were qualitative. A sample of 40 respondents was purposively selected for the study. These included 10 female-headed households, 10 male-headed households, five local leaders, five bachelors, five spinsters and five social service providers (in health, education, water, housing and transport). The data were collected using interviews and observations for primary data and documents analysis for secondary data. The analysis of the data generated by the interviews and observations involved a phenomenological approach by emphasising a deep understanding of the observed phenomena and views of the participants, literal description and narration of the emerging issues out of which authentic conclusions were made. During the interviews and observations, the researcher noted down in his diary the relevant issues (episodes, situations, events or instances) for accurate reporting. The main themes that emerged from the field notes and interviews were noted down, quoting extensively in verbatim format.

The study established that social networks are formed based on a multiple of factors that included geographical proximity, social clubs, shared schooling, work place, kinship, religion, shared values, attitudes, culture, social status, aspirations and marriage alliances. The study also found out that social networks are important in the survival of the urban poor by creating links

and nodes that enable such people to access food, water, employment, medication, shelter, transport and even marry or and attend functions such as burial, marriage and initiation ceremonies even without cash.

The study recommends for an inter-sectoral and participatory planning and the mobilisation of the less privileged into programs aimed at improving their welfare from the grass root. The study also recommends the need for empowerment projects for the youths and women that do not require huge sums of initial capital. Subsidised resources from NGOs, financial institutions and the government can be channelled to the youths and women associations to enable them to embark on activities that make them more productive and less destitute.

The study concludes by noting that the survival of the urban poor by social networks is a reflection of a multiple of the socio-economic problems of Kampala City e.g. destitution, poverty, rapid urbanisation, unemployment, informalisation of the economy and failure to expand the formal sector. As a result, communities have taken their own initiatives to survive so as alleviate poverty and destitution and to create opportunities. Further, the survival of the urban poor by social networks will continue as long as the state ceases to be the main actor in the generation of opportunities and welfare service provision. This of course follows government withdrawal as the major actor following the liberalisation of the economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The last 50 years or so have witnessed rapid urbanisation of Kampala with serious implications for social service provision especially in the areas of health, housing and garbage disposal among others (Sembojja & Therkildsen, 1995). Matters have worsened by the liberalisation of the economy with services going mainly to the paying clients. The most affected have been the poor who are socially isolated, materially deprived and found at the peripheral of the city where there is congestion and frequent outbreaks of communicable diseases (Nuwagaba & Mwesigwa, 1997; Gombay, 1994 in Kamulegeya, 2003). The biting poverty and destitution as evident from the wide spread unemployment, predominance of informal activities and the large number of peddlers, pickpockets and petty thieves; indicate the difficult times of the urban poor in Kampala. The situation for the urban poor has been made worse by the inadequate funding of the provision of social services, which for a long time was mainly from the central government and church (Arube-Wani, et al., 1997; Sembojja & Therkildsen, 1995). As a coping mechanism, the urban poor in Kampala City have entrenched themselves into social networks based on shared values, attitudes, culture, education, religion, tribe, neighbourhood, friendship and aspirations for survival. It is along this background that this study had to investigate the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Kampala City after the withdrawal of the state as the main actor following the liberalisation of the economy.

#### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The inadequate social service provision is one of the most conspicuous dimensions of poverty and destitution in the low-income areas of Kampala City where the youths, women and children feature prominently (Gombay, 1994; Kamulegeya, 2003). In the low-income neighbourhoods, residents are characterised by low literacy levels, material deprivation, economic exclusion, social isolation and limited access to resources. Upon such social and economic marginalisation, it is not a surprise that social networks based on a multiple of factors that include geographical proximity, social clubs, shared schooling, work place, kinship, religion, shared values, attitudes, culture, social status, aspirations and marriage alliances have proliferated especially among the

poor. There was therefore, need to find out how the urban poor survive using social networks when the state ceases to be the main actor or provider in the event of contracting economic conditions and increasing informalisation following the liberalisation of the economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to explore social networks and urban survival in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga ward in Kampala City.

### **1.4 Specific objectives**

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To establish the basis for the formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood
2. To explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti neighbourhood

### **1.5 Research questions**

To achieve the stated objectives, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the basis for the formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood?
2. What is the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti neighbourhood?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

Data on the social networks and urban survival in Uganda is very sketchy or generalised. Thus, there was need to generate specific data on social networks and urban survival in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga ward in Kampala City as a case study more so when large sections of the society are facing contracting economic conditions and increasing informalisation. This study is hoped to yield data that will be useful for proper planning and institutionalisation of a framework of action into the woes that afflict the urban poor characterised by low literacy levels, disease, material deprivation, economic exclusion, social isolation and limited access to resources. The findings, recommendations and conclusions will hopefully, benefit economic planners, city authorities, service providers, campaigners against poverty, politicians, non-

governmental organisations (NGOs) and opinion leaders to base their decisions and actions on concrete knowledge of issues supported by research other than subjective judgements. The researcher also hopes that this study will form a basis for further research into social networks and survival of the urban poor.

### **1.7.Scope of the study**

The study on social networks and urban survival in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga ward in Kampala City was qualitative and conducted in December 2013 using a case study design and purposive sampling technique. A sample of 40 respondents was selected for the study. The respondents included 10 female-headed households, 10 male-headed households, five local leaders, five bachelors, five spinsters and five social service providers (in health, education, water, housing and transport). The data were collected using interviews and observations for primary data and documents analysis for secondary data. The study sought to establish the basis for the formation of social networks; and to explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter critically reviews the literature related to social networks and urban survival. The literature particularly focuses on the formation of social networks and the role of social networks in urban survival.

#### **2.1 Formation of social networks**

Social networks are relations that encompass relatives, tribe-mates, neighbours and friends to whom an individual, group or family is tied socially usually by shared values, attitudes, culture, education, religion and aspirations (Audrey, 2003:384; Johnston:567). Such networks may be spatially concentrated as both cause and effect members choose to live in the same place as others in their network, thereby maximising the potential for interaction (Johnston:567).

The formation of social networks stretches as far back as to the roots of the humanity. According to Minar and Greer (1969), society begins with interaction, shared perspectives and commitment through which social interaction becomes an inescapable aspect of life. To Bakari (1988), social networks do not work through formal declarations and enacted laws but through communistic or socialistic relations, which provide protection of the socially and economically weak against the strong.

To Knox (1995), social networks as foundations of social organisation which attempt to illustrate the structure of social interaction by creating persons as points and relations as connecting lines. Social networks arise out of social and economic insecurity e.g. due to loss of a person and property, poverty, destruction of a livelihood, unemployment, etc, which appear to challenge the survival of the most vulnerable who are socially and economically weak. Thus, according to Bakari, (1988) and Bossert (1988), social networks are forms of insurance, for example, against famine, sickness, disability, old age, widowhood, orphanhood and loss of employment among others. To Leinhardt (1997), social networks are traditional forms of social security formed on the concept of social justice. Through social networks, community members show solidarity in

cases of emergency, a phenomenon extended among neighbours, family members and the village (Bakari, 1988; Bossert, 1988; Bryan, 1978).

For ages, social networks used to be typical of rural dwellers; however, the increasing socio-economic predicaments of urban and industrial development have increased their relevance in urban settings (Bryan, 1978). This phenomenon appears to ruralise cities when those who are socially and economically weak survive through extensive social networks based on religion, kin, shared schooling, marriage alliance, social status and geographical and neighbourhood proximity among others.

### **2.3 Social networks and urban survival**

Liberalisation and the growth of peripheral capitalism due to globalisation have left tens of thousands of people in the Developing World with little or no ability to access welfare services and to escape poverty (Killick, 1995; Olukoshi, 1996). In the case of Kampala, liberalisation left many people out of work and with deflated incomes or in destitution (Gombay, 1994 in Kamulegeya, 2003). In response to the shortcomings of liberalisation and the growth of peripheral capitalism where services mainly go to paying clients, as a survival mechanism, extensive social networks have been formed among both the rich and poor in Kampala City. Social networks are explored to access food, shelter, credit, medication, education, marry and to attend burial ceremonies among others.

To Bakari (1988) and Bossert (1988), social networks are forms of insurance against emergencies such as famine, sickness, disability, old age, widowhood, orphanhood, accidents, maternity invalidity, family burdens and loss of employment among others. It is through the strength of kinship, religion, ethnic identity, shared schooling, neighbourhood proximity, marriage alliance and shared work place that low income urban families survive in a competitive urban economy where opportunities are scarce (Bryan, 1978).

Through social networks, urban communities in the Developing World organise themselves into social support groups to address their predicaments. These include burial societies, rotating saving schemes, credit associations, sports and health clubs and dancing groups, which form the

is for social security to counter the increasing urban problems. In his study of Tanzania, cari (1988) illustrates how social networks play a crucial role in coping with urban employment in which many of the unemployed live with their relatives before securing a job.

### **Conclusion**

hough globalisation and liberalisation have increased the availability of consumer goods and ial services, unfortunately, it is mainly the paying clients are the ones who have benefited. s makes social networks vital for the daily survival and social mobility of the urban poor who socially isolated and materially deprived more so when the state is no longer the main actor l provider.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the study area, research design, sampling techniques and sample size, methods of data collection, data analysis and limitations of the study.

#### **3.2 Description of the study area**

The neighbourhood of Nabuititi lies roughly seven kilometres south of the centre of Kampala City. The area is predominantly poor as evident from the squalid conditions characterised by wanting housing, drainage, sanitation, garbage disposal and dominance of informal activities. Other striking features include material deprivation, social isolation, unemployment, high density of informal settlements, crime and vice and multi-ethnic population.

#### **3.3 Research design**

The study was conducted using a case study design. A case study design involves an intensive, descriptive and holistic analysis of an individual, group, institution or phenomenon in order to gain an insight into larger cases (Olive & Abel, 1999:173; Onen & Oso, 2008:71). The researcher therefore, considered social networks and urban survival in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga ward in Kampala City as a bounded case study for an in-depth analysis.

#### **3.4 Sampling techniques and sample size**

A non-probability sampling technique involving purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. The primary consideration of purposive sampling is on the researcher's judgment as to who can provide the best information to achieve the objectives of the study (Kumar, 2011:207). Thus, the researcher only goes to those people who in his opinion are likely to have the required information and willing to share it with him (Kumar p207). Purposive sampling technique was used to identify those respondents with the relevant information with a view of generating focused information. A sample of 40 respondents was purposively selected for the study. The respondents included 10 female-headed households, 10 male-headed households, five local leaders, five bachelors, five spinsters and five social service providers (in health, education,

water, housing and transport). The data were collected using interviews and observations for primary data and documents analysis for secondary data. After engaging 40 respondents in the study, the researcher assumed that no more new information was likely to emerge. As noted by Kumar p213, in qualitative research, when no more new information is emerging, it is assumed that one has reached the data saturation point and accordingly, the sample size is determined. Thus, the sample size was determined by the data saturation point instead of being fixed in advance.

### **3.4 Data collection**

The study used of a combination of data collection techniques hoping to draw on the strengths of each other. The data collected were both primary and secondary. Primary data were collected by the use of field observations and interviews. Secondary data were collected by documents analysis i.e. by critical review of earlier publications, official records, government publications, reports, journals and internet search among others. This enabled the researcher to acquire already processed or analysed data out of which research gaps were detected and comparisons made. Secondary data sources also provided data that may not be have been acquired from primary sources.

#### **3.4.1 Interviews**

This instrument involves face-to-face discussions, interaction or interpersonal communication between the researcher and respondents intended to elicit opinions (Abel & Olive, 1999:155; Onen & Oso, 2008:84). This instrument was used to yield descriptive or qualitative data. As noted by Abel and Olive (1999:156), attitudes, perceptions and emotions are best studied by qualitative methods. Thus, the interviews permitted the researcher to go beyond the statistical results. Structured and unstructured questions were used in the interviews. Under the structured interviews, a formal list of open-ended questions were asked to all respondents in the same way (appendix A). For the unstructured interviews, the interviewer probed respondents and guided the interview according to their answers. During the interviews, the researcher asked questions to establish the basis for the formation of social networks and to explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor. Interviews were conducted with 40 respondents purposively selected on their presumed knowledge about the subject of study. The respondents included 10

female-headed households, 10 male-headed households, five local leaders, five bachelors, five spinsters and five social service providers (in health, education, water, housing and transport). The aim was to collect focused data and data that were hard to observe in order to elicit opinions. Direct contact with the respondents also provided the researcher with the opportunity to gauge the accuracy of the answers given and seek clarifications on unclear responses by asking supplementary questions.

### **3.4.3 Observations**

This instrument involves the use of all senses to perceive and understand the experiences of interest to the researcher (Onen & Oso, 2008:84). Data were gathered through disguised observations (non-participant observation) in which the researcher was passive by merely taking notes in his diary of what he had observed e.g. about the evidence of social networking in areas such as access to food, water, employment, medication, shelter and transport among others. To achieve this, a list of items to be observed (observation checklist) was made. The list consisted of economic activities, infrastructure, nature and density of settlements and actions and behaviours of the residents (appendix B). This enabled the researcher to yield information which the respondents are normally unwilling or unable to provide; to record information as it occurs; explore topics that may be uncomfortable to informants; notice unusual aspects; and to gain first hand information to bridge the gap between what the respondents say and what actually happens. Such data enabled the researcher to establish the basis for the formation of social networks and to explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

The analysis of the qualitative data generated by the interviews and observations involved a phenomenological approach by emphasising a deep understanding of the observed phenomena and views of the participants, literal description and narration of the emerging issues out of which authentic conclusions were made. During the interviews and observations, the researcher noted down in his diary the relevant issues (episodes, situations, events or instances) for accurate reporting. The main themes that emerged from the field notes and interviews were noted down, quoting extensively in verbatim format. Content analysis of the interviews and observational field notes to identify the main themes, similar phrases, relationships between variables, common

sequences, differences and isolated patterns that emerged from the responses of the respondents and observational notes were made in order to reach conclusions with great authenticity.

### **3.7 Limitations of the study**

The study on social networks and urban survival could have been conducted in the whole of Uganda. However, the nature of the research design (i.e. case study) and sampling technique (i.e. purposive sampling) confined the study to a relatively smaller area in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga Ward. Besides, the sampling technique and the tools that were used in data collection have their own weaknesses. Thus, the data gathered mainly applies to this neighbourhood or neighbourhoods with the same conditions. In addition, the study was conducted for only one month in December 2012 using a sample of 40 respondents, which limited the scope of the data collected. Further, the researcher was both a student and worker and therefore, had limited time and financial resources for an extensive study. Such factors may limit the generalisation of the study to other parts of Uganda or lower the validity and reliability of the study. Nevertheless, this study provides a fertile ground for further research on issues of social networks and survival of the urban poor.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study on social networks and urban survival in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga ward in Kampala City. The findings are based on the objectives of the study that were to establish the basis for formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood; and to explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti neighbourhood. To achieve the stated objectives, the study was guided by the following research questions: what is the basis for the formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood? What is the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti neighbourhood? Data analysis and interpretation targeted a purposive sample of 40 respondents using a case study design. The data collected were qualitative captured through interviews and observations. The analysis, interpretation and presentation of the findings are under the headlines: formation of social network in Nabutiti neighbourhood and social networks and survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti neighbourhood all of which relate to the objectives of the study.

#### **4.2 Formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood**

The first objective of this study was to establish the basis for formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood. To achieve the stated objectives, the study was guided by the following research question. What is the basis for the formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood? The data collected and analysed under this question indicated that the formation of social networks was due to a combination of factors. These include ethnicity, kinship, friendship and religion. Other factors include geographical proximity, marriage alliances, gender and age; and shared workplace and shared schooling. The analysis and interpretation of the findings are presented in the subsections below:

##### **4.2.1 Ethnicity, kinship, friendship and religion**

The finding revealed that social networks form based on ethnicity, kinship, friendship and religion through either intentional or unintentional actions. The actions may involve reciprocal

exchange of hospitality, gifts, religious observances and attending funerals and memorials. Through such exchanges, households create social security against unforeseen emergencies that they may not be able to cope on their own e.g. sudden loss of a person and source of livelihood or lack of food and accommodation. The findings tally with how Bakari (1988); Bossert (1988) and Bryan (1978) described social networks are forms of insurance against emergencies such as famine, sickness, disability, old age, widowhood, orphanhood, accidents, maternity invalidity, family burdens and loss of employment among others. A 36-year old man had this to say in relation to social networks:

“I am Born Again Christian and I always keep company with them. We pray together on a daily basis. Therefore, when I have a problem, they come to my rescue”<sup>1</sup>.

A young man from eastern Uganda basing on ethnicity had this to say about how he had survived using social networks:

“My neighbours and I come from the same village. In case, any of us had a problem like shortage of food, lack of rent, etc, we all act collectively to help him or her out of the problem”<sup>2</sup>.

A 22-year old woman who had just migrated to Kampala noted that she found it easier to cope with the urban environment because of the support of a friend whom she was sharing the same religion and ethnicity and helped her with food, transport and accommodation. A middle-aged man also noted that through shared schooling and the same social class, he had developed a strong social bond with his old friend who stays in the same neighbourhood. They were sharing information regarding opportunities and could borrow from each other money should the need arise. Therefore, social networks are intentional or unintentional actions of reciprocity especially for those at the peripheral of society, which they exploit for their survival.

#### **4.2.2 Marriage alliances, gender and age**

The study also established the social networks form based on marriage alliances, gender and age. A common practice was for individuals who wanted to marry or to organise funeral rites for the departed to approach neighbours, associates and relatives for financial support. A married woman in her early 30s had this to say:

“Through social networks involving fellow women, neighbours, associates and

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<sup>1</sup> Born Again Christian

<sup>2</sup> Young man from eastern Uganda

relatives I was able to raise the money to organise a colourful wedding. I would not have managed without such support.”<sup>3</sup>

A young man in his late teens noted that through social networks, they had formed a group tasked to find opportunities such laundry work, fumigation and cleaning compounds in order to earn a living. The implication is that social networks form a kind of social security against uncertainties such as lack of employment or income. This is similar to the findings of Bakari (1988) and Bossert (1988) in their study of social networks in Tanzania.

#### **4.2.3. Shared workplace and shared schooling**

Social networks were also found to exist based on shared workplace and shared schooling. Many interviewees noted that they have acquaintances simply because they were working in the same place or attended the same school. A young woman in her late teens noted that she has acquaintance in the area because they were attending the same local vocational school while a market vendor noted that his social network include his fellow market vendors. The implication is that social networks form unintentionally but simply because of proximity, a point echoed by (Knox, 1995) about the formation of social networks.

### **4.3 Social networks and survival of the urban poor in Nabititi neighbourhood**

The second objective of this study was to explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabititi neighbourhood. To achieve this objective, the study was guided by the following research question. What is the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabititi neighbourhood? The data collected and analysed under this question indicated that the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor is multifaceted. Social networks are explored to access employment, credit/small loan, shelter, medication, food and marriage. The analysis and interpretation of the findings are presented in the subsections below:

#### **4.3.1 Employment**

The study found out that social networks are explored for purposes of accessing employment. Through social network connections, individual were able to access jobs. Those with limited social network connections were remaining unemployed for so long. A cleaner in one of the local

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<sup>3</sup> Married woman

restaurants echoed that she got her job through social network connections with her brother who knew the restaurant owner. The implication is that through social network connections based on shared schooling, geographical proximity and ethnicity among others, individuals were able to earn a livelihood a phenomenon echoed by Bryan (1978) about how low income urban families survive in a competitive urban economy where opportunities are scarce.

#### **4.3.2 Credit or small loan**

The study also found out that social networks are used to access small loans from relatives, friends, workmates and neighbours. This is similar to the findings of Bakari (1988) and Bossert (1988) in their study of social networks in Tanzania as major sources of credit. The loans could be used to pay school fees, buy food, clear rent, pay debts, etc. A market vendor selling *matoke* acknowledged that she was able to raise the initial capital for her business through social networks involving shared schooling, geographical proximity, religion, marriage alliance and ethnicity among others. However, she noted that those individuals who fail to pay back in time the loans extended to them put a strain on the social networks by creating uncalled for quarrels and police intervention. This implies that a strain on social networks can cause social instability among those who were formally friends to become foes. Never the less, social networks are a saviour for those who cannot access credit from the formal institutions because of lack of collateral or not being credit worth.

#### **4.3.3 Marriage**

The study also found out that social networks are used by those intending to marry to raise financial support through social networks based on relatives, friends, workmates and neighbours among others. A 34-year old married man noted that he was able to arrange a spectacular wedding through the support of relatives, friends, workmates and neighbours without which it would have been impossible. Since then, this man helps financially and morally those who intend to marry on condition that they also helped him with his wedding. The implication is that social networks are a form of insurance and social security. This is similar to the explanation of (Johnston, et al., 1994) of what social networks are.



#### **4.3.4 Shelter**

The study also found out that social networks are explored for accommodation. It was common for relatives, tribe-mates, workmates and old friends to stay under the same roof. This applied mainly to the new arrivals in the city, the unemployed and those still attending school and lack resources to stand on their own. The findings are similar to what Bryan (1978) noted about how urban families survive in a competitive urban economy where opportunities are scarce. This implies that the urban poor without extensive social networks live a more destitute life.

#### **4.3.5 Medical care**

The study revealed that social networks play a role when accessing medical care. It was found out that individuals access medical care through connections based on neighbourhood proximity, ethnicity, relatives, etc to foot medical bills and other medical expenses. A 68-year old man paralysed by a stroke and a chronically sick 57-year old woman acknowledged that they survive solely through the support of neighbours, friends and relatives to meet their medical expenses. The implication is that social networks are a form of social security for the debilitated more so when the government abdicates its role as the main actor, a phenomenon also echoed by (Bakari, 1988; Bossert, 1988).

#### **4.3.6 Feeding**

The study established that relatives, friends and neighbours among others to access food exploit social networks. It was common for the new arrivals to the city and the unemployed to be fed by relatives and friends until they could fully fend for themselves. A 34-year old woman noted that for the last 10 years she has been depending on her brother for all her upkeep including feeding because she has never been gainfully employed in her life. Similarly, a 22-year old woman noted that she had to befriend a food market vendor who could extend food supplies to her on credit because her income was very irregular. This implies that social networks are form of social support whereby community members show solidarity in cases of emergencies (such as lack of food and employment), a phenomenon extended among neighbours, family members and the village. This concurs with what Bakari (1988); Bossert (1988); Bryan (1978); and Leinhardt (1997) observed about social networks as traditional forms of social security formed on the concept of social justice and community solidarity.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 Recommendations**

The study has shown that the formation of social networks was due to a combination of factors. The factors include ethnicity, kinship, friendship and religion, marriage alliances, gender and age, and shared workplace and shared schooling. The study has also shown that social networks are explored to access employment, credit or small loans, shelter, medication, food and marriage. It was against this background that the researcher made the following recommendations:

The first objective of the study was to establish the basis for the formation of social networks in Nabititi neighbourhood. The study has shown that social networks were due to a combination of factors, which included ethnicity, kinship, friendship and religion, marriage alliances, gender, age, geographical proximity, shared workplace and shared schooling. Therefore, the study recommends the need to address material deprivation and the empowerment of the poor through sustainable and genuine service delivery at a wider level to cater for all population segments. For example, the starting point could be to put in place an affordable and effective healthcare insurance scheme so that all can get quick and cheap treatment in times of ill health. This calls for policy interventions for social justice and equity through a multisectoral approach involving various stakeholders such as the central government, private sector, NGOs, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) and the local community.

The second objective of the study was to explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabititi neighbourhood. The study has shown that social networks are explored to access employment, credit or small loans, shelter, medication, food and marriage. Therefore, the study recommends for a more sustainable approach like empowerment projects spearheaded by NGOs, financial institutions and the government for the youths and women that do not require huge sums of initial capital in order to enhance equity and social justice. The tokenism from social networks may not be enough to address the ever-pressing needs of those materially deprived, as those involved in the social networks may get fatigued.

## 5.2 Conclusions

This study explored social networks and urban survival in Nabutiti neighbourhood in Kansanga ward in Kampala City. This was after the realisation that many urban poor who included the women and youths were earning a living from social network connections based on ethnicity, kinship, friendship, religion, geographical proximity, marriage alliances, gender, age, shared workplace and schooling. The study specifically sought to establish the basis for the formation of social networks in Nabutiti neighbourhood; and to explore the role of social networks in the survival of the urban poor in Nabutiti neighbourhood. The study established that social networks were due to a combination of factors, which included ethnicity, kinship, friendship and religion, marriage alliances, gender, age, geographical proximity, shared workplace and schooling. The study also found out that social networks are explored to access employment, credit or small loans, shelter, medication, food and marriage.

In view of these findings, the study concludes that the survival of the urban poor by social networks was a reflection of a multiple of socio-economic factors in society e.g. destitution, government neglect, poverty, rapid urbanisation, unemployment, informalisation of the economy and failure to expand the formal sector. As a result, communities take their own initiatives to survive so as alleviate trauma, poverty and destitution and to create opportunities or employment by involuntarily forming social network connections. Further, the survival of the urban poor by social networks will continue for those at the peripheral as a form of social security and insurance because of the uncertain future following the withdrawal of the government as the main actor in service delivery and creation of jobs following the liberalisation of the economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This left services going mainly to the paying clients, leaving the urban poor in an awkward position.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

What are social networks?

How are social networks formed in this area?

What is the role of social networks in this area?

Do you belong to any social network in this area?

How do you benefit from social networks?

What problems are social networks faced?

What is the way forward for the urban poor?

**APPENDIX B**  
**OBSERVATION CHECKLIST**

1. Formal and informal economic activities
2. Social service facilities
3. Nature and density of settlements
4. Behaviours of revellers, traders and buyers
5. Number of women and youths versus the number of men