

# KALERWE MARKET IS A POINT OF CONVERGENCE FOR FAIRLY CHEAP FRESH FOODSTUFF



In spite of the stench, vendors lay out their wares, on the sodden ground in Kalerwe market located on Gayaza road near the Northern By-pass five kilometres from the city

## Kalerwe's sanitation challenge

By Umar Nsubuga

**D**irty grey black water flows out of a stream covering an entire section of Kalerwe market.

In spite of the stench, vendors lay out their wares, on the sodden ground.

There are heaps of different types of vegetables and food stuff. Buyers are forced to hold their clothes up to avoid soiling them, which is a difficult feat.

Located on Gayaza Road near the Northern By-pass about 5km from the city centre, Kalerwe Market has been a point of convergence for fairly cheap fresh foodstuff from Luwero, Mbarara, Wakiso, Mukono and other districts. The market is quite busy in the morning hours. Aisha Nakibuuka, 56, a resident for over 20 years says she receives thousands of customers and traders, every day.

Kalerwe boasts of thousands of residents. The area that everyone dreaded back then has not changed much. It still gets muddy and slippery when it rains heavily and during the dry season it is dusty.

Margret Nakimera who has lived and worked in Kalerwe for the last 19 years says poor garbage disposal is part of their challenge.

"Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) is responsible for collecting garbage and proper management of waste. However, it is common to see heaps of garbage along streets and pathways in Kalerwe. Besides, there is poor disposal of human waste, especially in



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### GARBAGE PITS THAT HARBOUR FLIES HOVERING AROUND ARE THE FEEDING GROUND FOR THE POOR MAN'S HOME

congested areas of the market. As a result, our health has been at a far greater risk, mostly in rainy seasons", she says.

Peter Kauju, the KCCA spokesperson says Kalerwe market is not owned by KCCA. He added that a private garbage collector is responsible for collecting and taking the garbage to Kiteezi landfill.

"We are really not responsible, unless there is a big issue that is when we come in," Kauju says.

Dr Alice Nalwanga, a public health expert says some areas around Kalerwe market are a health risky for market vendors

and residents. The poor sanitation, she says, predisposes them to diseases like dysentery, typhoid and diarrhoea.

"I am tired of continually looking over my shoulder," says Nakibuuka, who sold her land and house, but retained a small shop. "I would like to get up in the morning and not have to spend the first part of my day repairing damage from the night before. I would have loved to live here and raise my grandchildren on the very plot their grandfather passed on to me, but I don't feel safe. "Nights are risky, when you are inside your room; somebody comes

and grabs one or two items from another room and takes off," says Nakibuuka.

Despite the obvious opportunities available to them, some youth in Kalerwe prefer to live a life of criminality. In the back alleys of the market, it is quite evident that some of them are up to no good.

#### Hours of operation

The market doesn't close until around 1:00am, when traders cover their commodities with pieces of canvas, leaving everything under the protection of guards.

By 4:00am the next morning, a new day is knocking at the door.

Trucks laden with produce arrive from all over the country with literally every farm produce.

By 5:00am, customers have started arriving, ready for shopping.

### Horrible stench in the area

Inside Kalerwe market and the surrounding, a horrible stench fills the air. Instead of wooden structures and garbage, drainage and sewage surrounds the barriers.

Garbage pits that harbour flies hovering around them, are the feeding ground for the poor man's home.

There are no decent latrines and bathrooms, Musa Iga the LC2 secretary of information says. One latrine he adds, is shared by over 10 households and they are in a sorry state.

He, however, accuses the residents of being irresponsible.

"Some parts of the community suffer during the rainy season because of poor drainage system, which is made worse by the garbage that residents dump into the channels," he says.

"We as leaders have tried because every day we collect garbage, with the help of KCCA," he adds.

Steven Mungi, a local councillor in the area also says the drainage channels are in a sorry state because most traders, and food vendors dump their waste in the drainages.

This blocks the channels and when the food stuff rots, it emits a foul smell.

Public toilets in Kalerwe are in a bad state too.

With the cost of access at sh200, many people here cannot afford to use the few public toilets in the area.

This means that they use *buveeras*, drainages and alleys in the area.

According to Mungi, garbage skips are not sufficient.

"The shortage of garbage skips is also coupled with irresponsible rubbish disposal practices by residents, are some of the factors that have contributed to poor sanitation in Kalerwe," he says.

He also added that it makes garbage collection even more costly.