

In an era where it is everyone for himself and God for us all, this alternative to the city, is one of the few places where community bonding is cherished.

# Kireku: A suburb choking on dust

BY ESTHER OLUKA  
eoluka@ug.nationmedia.com

One of the most persistent problems motorists face on the Kampala-Jinja highway is the annoying traffic jam, especially on days such as when children are heading back to school.

To save time, some drivers opt for alternative routes, such as, the one in Kireku, a locality situated between Namataba-Bweyogerere and Namanve Industrial Park. Besides being a common traffic escape route for motorists, Gerald Kiberu, the area chairperson, says the locality is also a business and residential area. "There are a number of people of different backgrounds working and staying here," he says.

## Housing and People

It is interesting to note that people who live here are of different classes. You will find residents with beautiful enclosed buildings while others have simple mud wattle houses roofed with iron sheets. The other category of residents are those who rent. Depending on one's choice and preference, they can get a rental apartment for as low as Shs80,000 or higher than Shs500,000. Kiberu says a 100 by 50 feet plot size costs about Shs50m to Shs70m and a 100 by 100 feet plot size costs about Shs150m. He, however, says, the cost depends on particular locations of the land. He says this is because Kireku is near the Namanve Industrial Park, which is a fast growing business centre.

Mzee Juma, a 70-year-old elder in the community, says the people who stay here are friendly and interactive.

"For instance, it is quite difficult for neighbours to pass each other without exchanging greetings. Personally, a number of people always make an effort to inquire about my health almost on a daily basis," Juma says.

Also, in unfortunate circumstances such as death, a number of locals get concerned and make communal contributions for the funeral and burial arrangements.

## The issues in the village

The majority of residents Daily Monitor interviewed complained that the biggest problem they face in the locality is the dust.

"It is too much in this place as we don't have a tarmac road. What even makes matters worse is that vehicles love using this place as an alternative route," says Benjamin Kironde, who has been staying in Kireku for the last 10 years.

Unlike in the rainy season, the dust is always a lot during the dry spell. Kironde stresses the point that during this time, most of the houses get a brown coating because of the dust.

Stephanie Mbabazi, another resident of Kireku, says dwellers without private means of transport are hit the hardest. "You will find yourself covered in dust stains before even arriving at home," Mbabazi says.

Many times, she is forced to wrap



Most motorists heading to the city use Kireku as a short cut to avoid the heavy traffic in Bweyogerere. PHOTO BY ESTHER OLUKA

herself up with a shawl when walking or taking a ride on a motorcycle.

Like every other community member, she hopes that government, specifically the Ministry of Works and Transports, come to their rescue by tarmacking the road. Besides the issue of dust, it is also claimed that there is also group of unruly youth called *kado* terrorising residents during the night.

"They like moving in the dark because no one can easily identify them," says Joseph Wakabi, a student.

He adds: "These boys ask for money from people they stumble upon. If you give it (money) to them, they won't hurt you. Those who resist are beaten before their valuables are taken."

For this reason, many residents feared walking in the night. Kiberu affirms that these "young" boys

caused uneasiness within the locality in the past.

"These are mostly from big families, for instance whose parents had either passed away separated," he says.

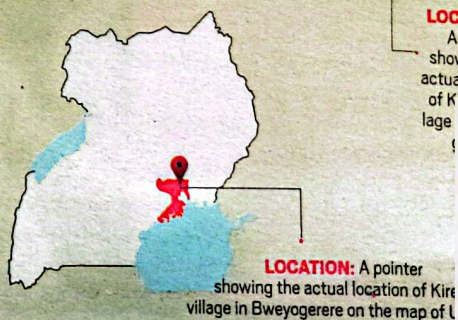
However, they have been under control in recent years.

"We worked together with and had some of them arrested, rehabilitated into juvenile homes. There those who counselled others re-united with their families," Kiberu says.

# 70m

AVERAGE COST OF A 50X100 PLOT OF LAND IN KIREKU

## LOCATOR MAP SHOWING KIREKU



## BUSINESS

Some of the common businesses one will find in this community include riding bodabodas, retail shops, guest houses, restaurants, brick layers, and rolex stalls, among others. Joseph Komaketch, says during his three years of running a retail show in the locality, he has noticed that many people love bargaining and purchasing cheap commodities.

"For instance, if I am selling a packet of salt at Shs600, you will find a customer begging me to reduce it to Shs500. Or, sometimes they opt to go and buy from a shop keeper selling his items more cheaply than others," Komaketch says.

There are mostly clinics in the locality offering different medical services including checkups such as HIV/Aids testing, cancer screenings antenatal care, and minor surgery, among others. Kireku Medical Centre is the biggest health unit in the area.

LOC A show actual location of Kireku village

LOCATION: A pointer showing the actual location of Kireku village in Bweyogerere on the map of Uganda