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Informal food systems in Kitwe

Introduction

- **Defining the informal economy**
- Losby (2002) – a series of activities that, by occurring outside the arena of normal regulated economy, escape official record keeping.
- Niyobuhungiro defines, “an informal economy includes a variety of different types of employment and activities, such as: transport, repair of old materials, catering, retail of fresh or prepared products, waste collection, personal services, etc.”
- Hansen (2010) – recent development orthodoxy describes the informal activities as examples of micro entrepreneurship hold a solution to urban poverty.
- Carolyn Steel (2008) – “...in order to understand poverty, we need to look at them through their food,” hence “ ...wonder that cities are fed at all.”

Introduction

- The Informal food system has existed side by side with the formal mining activities since the early 1920s, and has evolved still pinned on original reasons - to supplement meagre incomes (Epstein, cited in Dandule, 2012).
- Copper mining has been a blessing to the Copperbelt and Zambia due to absence of wars, no dictator, no child soldiers and its not a failed state (Hobbes, 2013), which actually contradicts with scholars on political economy.
- However, the same writer echoes, “Zambia is a very poor country... a story of a country watching its wealth disappear, a country making everyone rich but itself,” (Ibid)
- The mining sector is the backbone of the Zambian economy but has been criticized for failing to be engines of growth and economic development .
- Informal food system should be seen as a means to counter the resource curse for the lower end of the labour market not benefiting directly from mining activities

Introduction

- Kitwe is the second largest city in the country after Lusaka with a population 522,092, at 671.9 persons per square kilometer (Central Statistics Office, 2010).
- The city (and neighbouring towns) has been the hub of the Zambia's copper mining activities since the 1920s together with other Copperbelt mining towns.
- Kitwe is considered a secondary city (for research purposes) – cities of between 500-000 to 3million people and may not be well known beyond their national or regional boundaries and of course, are centres performing vital governance, logistical and production functions.
- The Copperbelt province is a highly urbanized area in comparison to other parts of the country.
- The provincial and national economy is highly dependent on mining activities.
- According to Hobbes, “if Zambia is married to copper, then Kitwe is handcuffed to it.” thus almost all activities in the Copperbelt are linked to copper mining hence its vulnerability to fluctuating commodity prices.

Problem Statement

- Mining has been the backbone of the local and national economy for over 80yrs.
- Not much has been done to integrate poor urban households to tap into the benefits enjoyed by the formal sector.
- Increasing urban population creating new challenges on how the economic and social well being of these urban residents will be met especially those dependent on informal activities for their livelihoods.
- Over the years a lot of emphasis has been put on food supply, to produce more food, while food access has been at the periphery
- The poor came up with their own livelihood strategies, which are within their means, hence the rise in the informal sector. However there is a lack of research on the contribution of the sector to economic development and to the quantify consumption of informal food in Kitwe.
- Huge human impact hiding beneath the statistics (Allex, 2011) produced by national and inter governmental organisations, related to sudden shocks, climate change, price changes, global economic instability.
- Thus the focus for this research is to contribute to the discourse of why people are still going hungry, why the people (in Kitwe) are still poor and what can be done about it.

Objectives

- **Broad objective**

To develop a detailed analysis of the matebeto food preparation activity and generation of cleaner production ideas in order to in order to reduce poverty.

- **Specific objectives**

- Examine the production and preparation processes of matebeto food systems in Kitwe.
- Analyse socio-economic and environmental impact of the food systems.
- Examine alternative cleaner production system that can enhance the sustainability of the sector.

Informal economy : Perspectives

- Structuralist views of the informal economy – subordinated economic units and workers that serve to reduce input and labour costs while increasing the competitiveness of large capitalist firms (Moser 1978; Castells and Portes, 1989).
- Neo-liberal views on the informal economy – choose to operate informally to avoid the costs, time and effort of regulation. A democratic alternative to state led economic development emphasize its potential for employment creation (De Soto, 1989; Castells and Portes 1989. A direct result of over-regulation, high taxes and state interference (Williams, 2013; De Soto 1989).
- Voluntarists - A product of rational behavior of innovative entrepreneurs that seek to escape government regulation and registration of business enterprises.
- Informal economy as historical, economic, social and economic and political context with which it has emerged due to general economic decline (Tripp, 1997)
- People act strategically and guided by their values and norms (Habermars in Seur, 1996 cited in Tripp, 1997)

Drivers of the Informal economy:

- Rapid urbanization – Zambia is a highly urbanized country (CSO, 2010) due to the mining pull factor, and resulting in more people look into urban areas for their livelihood (Crush & Frayne, 2010), resulting in mining and urbanization, both engines of growth in their own right, interacting in a complex way in the urbanisation of poverty
- Economic liberalization and structural adjustments which resulted in austerity measures, job losses and state failure to provide employment.
- Fluctuating international commodities prices and Zambia's dependency on copper (oil prices, global recession of 2008, current slow down in growth of China, which is the main buyer of Zambia's Copper).

Role of the Informal economy

- According to (Hansen, 2010) – informal economy is “... an important economic resource for urban livelihoods and the centre of storm for controversy.”
- Provide jobs (largest employer globally)
- Encourages entrepreneurial activity
- Helps reduce poverty
- Size of informal economy as a percentage of gross national income ranges from 30% in South Africa to 60% in Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (World Bank, 2001); some economies like DRC are 100% informal (Hansen, 2004).
- NB, size and role of the informal sector increases during economic recession, periods of adjustments and transition (Njaya, 2014)

The food system

- The food system:
- Is made up of all the paths that food travels from production and processing to distribution, consumption and disposal (Portland Plan Background Report, 2009).
- Food today has globalized and sometimes travels thousands of miles from production to consumption hence becoming a combination of local, international, formal and informal system all interdependent.
- The Zambian food system is not different; According to Abrahams(2010), “the Zambian food system is an eclectic mix of formal, high value industry...large capital investments, informal markets with its array of traders and vendors...”

Defining Informal food sector

- Commonly known as street vending or informal food catering
- Dardano (2003) – food prepared on the streets and ready-to-eat, or prepared at home and consumed on the streets
- Include snacks, main meals or beverages often reflecting traditional local cultures and existing in endless variety (Winamo and Allain, 1991)
- Also includes foods sold in pushcarts, caravans, temporary stalls
- Its considered to be illegal but has helped to reduce unemployment, increase incomes of the vendors and providing urban dwellers with inexpensive variety of meals (Njaya)

Informal economy and urban poverty

- Half the population in SSA lives in urban areas and this will continue, albeit rapidly (UNFPA, 2007 cited in Jongh, 2013).
- The result is urban environments becoming more important as the majority of residents live there (Ibid).
- Increasing urban unemployment contributing to declining living standards, urban poverty and deprivation.
- Through urbanization, the transfer of rural poverty to urban areas is rising (Frayne et al., 2009; Mercado et al., 2007)
- Who are the urban poor? – those experiencing deprivation, are discriminated against due to their social position (Mercado et al., 2007), have limited access to income and employment, inadequate and insecure living condition, poor infrastructure and services, vulnerability to risks etc (Chamhuri et al., 2012).

Research questions

- What are the trends in informal food patterns
- What are the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the informal food sector
- What are is the nature of challenges affecting informal food catering.
- What policy recommendations can drawn to enable sustainable development of informal food sector

Significance of study

- Informal food catering is a people friendly street economy that has potential to create sustainable livelihood and contribute to the economy, if the necessary institutional framework and infrastructural support is rendered.
- Thesis: Acknowledge that the informal sector is one of the largest employer and there is need to invest in it infrastructure and cleaner production systems
- The informal system faces neglect from local and national authorities, politicians and city planners who are all interested in the 'global city' idea hence seen as an illegal sector, an eyesore which should be made to disappear.

Scope of the Study

- This study will focus on matebeto restaurants' food and beverages production processes, in the informal sector in and around Chisokone Market and the greater Kitwe urban area.
- It will also examine food safety, waste disposal and the use of alternative, affordable and environmentally friendly (clean) fuels in the sector to enhance competitiveness and productivity

Methodology

- Secondary research – data from literature and archives, documentary reviews on the Zambian diet and mining influence.
- Use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to enable triangulation
- Use of snow balling to identify key stakeholders in government, non-government organization and informal sector
- Primary data collection - direct participant observation , focus group discussion (with various stakeholders, local authorities and representatives of informal traders)
- Semi structured in-depth interviews for socio-economic and technical data and to standardize the research.