



Hawking as a survival strategy for the urban poor in Nairobi: the case of women

Winnie Mitullah

I. INTRODUCTION

THIS PAPER CONSIDERS the role of hawking in the survival strategy of low-income women and their families. It draws on the findings of a study carried out in Nairobi in 1987/8 which interviewed both hawkers and those using and supporting the services they offer. Section one presents information on the importance of such activities to household income while Section two offers a brief history to the trade. Section three discusses the concept and nature of the informal sector. Sections four to six discuss different aspects of the study's findings including the hours worked and income of the hawkers and the problems they encounter - including harassment by the public authorities. Section seven explores some policy implications which emerge from the new understanding of hawker enterprises. A final section presents the main recommendations to emerge from the study.

In almost all parts of the world, women continue to take responsibility for their families including providing their basic needs. Indeed the assumption of economic support by a male family head has become unrealistic as larger numbers of households are made up of single persons living alone, or of women and children only. Women are frequently the main (or only) providers for themselves and their children, and increasing proportions of women in all households are entering both paid labour and self-employment in order to contribute to household income.⁽¹⁾

Contrary to colonial and immediate post colonial perceptions that women could not provide labour outside the home, women are currently engaged in various non-domestic activities in Africa. But the fact that most of them operate within the informal sector which is often poorly or not remunerated has led to a lack of statistics suitable for planning. In most African countries, women are found operating small scale trade in perishable commodities and food grains. Historically, they have been noted to play a key role in small scale trade especially in market places. As Mabogunje notes in a West African city: "When a woman is not trading at the market, it is often for one of two reasons. Her marital status makes the long hours of absence from home impracticable. Perhaps she is yet the only wife of her hus-

Winnie Mitullah has an MA in political science and has completed further studies at the Institute of Environmental Science, University of Toronto, specialising in urban issues. In Kenya, she has worked for Mazingira Institute, the Ministry of Local Government and, most recently, the Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi. She is currently undertaking a doctorate at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York which seeks to assess the gap between the Kenyan state's policy objective of housing the poor and the outcome, which is a proliferation of unplanned settlements. This work focuses on the informal sector and the NGOs that support it.

Contact address: Institute for Advanced Architectural Studies, University of York, Kings Manor, York YO1 5DD, UK.

1. UNICEF (1984), "Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Kenya", UNICEF Kenya Office/CBS

2. Mabogunje, A. L. (1961), "The Market Women", Ibadan No. 11

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4. Nyirenda, A. A. (1957), "African market vendors in Lusaka", *The Rhodes-Livingston Journal*, No. 22

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band or most junior of the wives. When this is no handicap, it may be that her financial resources do not permit her to pay overhead charges incurred by owning a stall in the market. Then she remains at home a typical petty trader".⁽²⁾

Whereas this may not be typical of present day Nairobi, the market women in both East and West Africa are identified with the selling of fruits and vegetables. In Nairobi, their trade has earned them the nickname *mama mboga* (mother of vegetables). The sale of foodstuff by women dates back to traditional African societies, where it was normal for women to sell surplus food crops. This role of women was hardly disturbed by colonial interventions which introduced cash crop farming, export/import trade and wage labour for men.

In Accra, Ghana, the number of women market traders, street sellers and hawkers of food was estimated at 13-15,000 in 1966. Thus one in 12 women over the age of 15 was retailing food full or part time.⁽³⁾ A paper published in 1957 noted that women dominated the sale of prepared food in Lusaka, Zambia.⁽⁴⁾ A more recent study found that the market trade in Lusaka represented a new era of activity for women, although it supplemented rather than undermined their role as wives and mothers.⁽⁵⁾ A study in Kampala (Uganda) in 1966 found the proportion of female traders to be higher in the cooked food trade, whereas in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a study found that nearly 60 per cent of the sellers were women.⁽⁶⁾ Dar-es-Salaam seems to be the discrepancy; a recent study found that only 99 out of 3,223 market and street food sellers were women.⁽⁷⁾

Thus it is not unusual that women dominate the food trade in Nairobi. Fruit and vegetables are the most significant commodities of trade in Nairobi formal markets and that the majority of those engaged in the trade are women.⁽⁸⁾ It has also been suggested that women in Nairobi have historically designed survival strategies for earning money while taking care of their children, especially through the sale of vegetables.⁽⁹⁾

This paper maintains that hawking in general, and especially that of fruit and vegetables in Nairobi, is a source of livelihood for a high proportion of the city population. It should therefore be protected and promoted; interference with it implies a threat to the livelihood of many urban residents.

Many issues have been raised about hawking, especially in the Kenyan press, but authentic research data has been lacking. In Nairobi, the plight of the hawkers is known to many residents, but their knowledge is limited to the services hawkers provide and the harassment they face. Very little is known about their socio-economic background, business organization, operations and constraints. This research aims to highlight some key issues emerging from such an analysis.

The research is based on surveys carried out in Nairobi between November 1987 to April 1988. A two stage sampling method was used. The first stage sampled five hawking zones in the city of Nairobi: city centre, industrial area, Parklands, Buru Buru and Mathare. These are business, industrial, high, medium and low income residential areas respectively. The second stage involved the identification of informal retailers in each area. Maps were used to identify hawking areas and the population of hawkers in each area ascertained. This varied from between 150 to 650 per area. A proportional sample was selected from each area, giving a total of 425 hawkers who were interviewed using a structured questionnaire. Unstructured interviews were also carried out with 15 randomly selected consum-

10. Mitullah, Winnie (1990), "Hawking as a survival strategy for the urban poor: the case of Nairobi" unpublished study, The Ford Foundation

11. Kitching, G. (1980), *Class and Economic Change in Kenya*, Yale University Press, Yale

12. Parker, M. (1948), "Political and social aspects of development of municipal government in Kenya with special reference to Nairobi", Colonial Office, London

13. Nairobi City Commission (1915) "Council of works/native affairs committee", Minutes 195-26: 8/6/1923.

14. Werlin W. W. (1974), *Governing An African City: A Study of Nairobi*, African Publishing House, London

15. East African Standard (1954)

16. Nairobi City Commission (1984), *Minutes of Ordinary Meeting (7/2/84)*, City Hall

ers in the five zones, four policy-makers, six administrators, ten licensed hawkers or traders associations and two finance institutions operating loan schemes for small scale enterprises.⁽¹⁰⁾

II. HISTORY

SMALL SCALE TRADE has been an integral part of Kenya's economy since the pre-colonial period. Early travellers noted extensive trading among various ethnic groups. Women dominated local trade, whereas men participated in long distance trade.⁽¹¹⁾ In Nairobi, hawking dates back to the coming of the railway in 1899, when Nairobi was founded and settlement started; Nairobi owes its origin to being a construction camp for the railway being built between the coast (Mombasa) and Uganda. A number of Indian railway employees began the process by planting fruits and vegetables along Nairobi river. Some of this was sold to Europeans. African employees worked as gardeners and salesmen, but in time they realised the gains inherent in hawking and started their own businesses.

As more Africans opted for hawking instead of wage labour, the activity started to be controlled. But despite restrictions on hawking, especially on fruit and vegetables on the pretext of their being a health hazard, the number of hawkers continued to increase. By 1914 there were an estimated 2000 hawkers.⁽¹²⁾ By the 1920s the Municipal Council had to include a special provision in the by-laws granting free hawking licenses to cultivators selling their own produce.⁽¹³⁾ This became an opportunity for Africans to undertake all sorts of hawking activities, although vegetables and fruits predominated. At first the activity supplemented wage labour but some individuals later gave up wage labour for hawking.

By 1941, 41 per cent of hawkers licenses were for fruit and vegetables. When the state of emergency began in 1952, the number of hawkers licenses issued to Africans was reduced from 732 to 594. In 1953, the hawking of charcoal and tea was completely abolished.⁽¹⁴⁾ By 1954, the only street trading permitted in the commercial and residential areas of Nairobi was selling of newspapers, and even this was restricted.⁽¹⁵⁾

When the state of emergency was lifted in 1961, the number of hawkers increased with population growth. Many people, especially those coming from Kikuyu areas near Nairobi, opted for hawking after failing to find employment. At this time, the issue was not whether they should be allowed to hawk but rather how best hawking could be organised and how many should be licensed. This led to the building of new markets on the eve of independence and thereafter. Since then, the number of hawkers has constantly increased and the formal markets have never kept pace with demand.

For enforcement purposes, the city is currently divided into six inspectorates, each commanded by an Inspector Grade 1. Under each command, there is a squad of *askaris* (police) to ensure that operating hawkers have licenses and that kiosks being built are authorised by the Town Clerk's office. Due to the numbers involved and lack of transport, enforcement is erratic and can be characterised as harassment.

According to the Nairobi City Council licensing superintendent, there were about 30,000 hawkers in the city in 1984, but the press maintained it was 45,000 or more.⁽¹⁶⁾ Despite these enormous numbers, the city authorities issue only 5,000 licenses a year, and

17. See reference 16.

18. Sandbrook, Richard (1982), *The Politics of Basic Needs: Urban Aspects of Assaulting Poverty in Africa*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto

19. Alejandro, C. and Sakia (1987), "Making it underground: comparative material on the informal sector in western market economies", University of Chicago, Chicago

20. Lloyd, P. (1982), *A Third World Proletariat*, George Allen and Unwin Press, London

21. Veechibala, C. (1984), "Informal sector in socialist economies: a re-examination of the relationship of the informal sector to development", *Regional Development Dialogue*, Vol. 5, No. 2

22. Bohannan, P. and Dalton, G. (1962), *Markets in Africa*, North Western University Press

intend to reduce this number. During 1988, this was achieved by insisting that hawkers who had not yet constructed kiosks should not be allowed to do so and would lose their licenses.

Given these figures, an estimated 25,000 hawkers are always at war with the city authorities. Furthermore, the city loses about one million Kenya shillings (US \$ 50,000) in license fees in the peri-urban and unplanned areas where hawking is widespread.⁽¹⁷⁾ A similar amount to that incurred by government not charging "slumlords" land rent or rates by not acknowledging informal sector housing. The city does not deal with these issues due to the numbers involved as well as political and social pressures.

III. THE INFORMAL SECTOR

URBANIZATION IN AFRICAN countries is recent except for West Africa and some coastal East African towns which had cities of more than 20,000 as early as the fifteenth century.⁽¹⁸⁾ Nairobi, like many African cities, owes its origins to colonial administration and the collection, exchange and distribution of agricultural commodities. Rapid urbanization in most Third World countries is not based on industrialization as was the case in Europe and the western world. It is therefore accompanied by poverty, unemployment and the growth of unplanned areas without services.

Due to the prevalence of western ideology, the reliance of large numbers of urban residents on small scale self employment and the informal sector has been subject to harassment or at best lack of support. Only recently has the informal sector received some marginal recognition. Deepening economic crises have led to policies of structural adjustment which call for reduced public expenditure and a new look at the potential of the small scale indigenous economy.

The informal sector is not homogeneous. Alejandro and Sakia argue that it comprises direct subsistence, small scale production and trade, and subcontracting to semi-clandestine enterprises and home-workers.⁽¹⁹⁾ Based on its empirical findings, this paper is concerned with the direct subsistence group.

Lloyd argues that the informal sector is a creation of the capitalist sector and highly dependent on it.⁽²⁰⁾ The formal sector provides effective demand for informal sector products, while the population in the informal sector forms a substantial proportion of the formal sector market. Neo-marxists describe the informal sector as petty commodity production. Veechibala notes that petty commodity production responds to gaps in supply and demand in the dominant capitalist mode of production.⁽²¹⁾

Hawkers fill an essential gap which the formal market fails to satisfy. Bohannan and Dalton associate the birth of the informal sector with shortages of commodities as well as the need for supplementary income.⁽²²⁾ The food supply needs of urban workers coupled with their relatively higher incomes facilitate the emergence of hawking. Given a high rate of unemployment, petty commodity trade and production is a viable alternative to absolute urban poverty.

Thus informal sector activities such as hawking have two economic roles: first, as a link between primary (agricultural) producers and urban consumers, as well as between industrial producers and the consumers; and second, as an employer of the urban poor. Instead of being dismissed as chaotic, disorganized and disruptive to city planning and law enforcement, the informal sector should be pro-

moted and planned for, as a source of income for the low income class and investment by up-and-coming entrepreneurs.

IV. NAIROBI HAWKERS

HAWKERS IN NAIROBI include all age groups but most (58 per cent) are under 25 years of age. The majority of the 425 hawkers interviewed (68 per cent) were female, consistent with other similar studies especially in the area of food hawking. Arap Chepkurui's study of Nairobi in 1981 found 65 per cent women, who were unmarried, widowed or divorced and with an average of four children to support.⁽²³⁾ This study, however, found that 54 per cent of all hawkers were married and 32 per cent single, with much smaller proportions divorced, widowed or separated.

The presence of two children below five in the sample is explained by the fact that many hawkers, especially women, use their children as assistants who can stay on the job while they attend to other business or household duties, including buying stock or feeding other children at home or in school. Those between the ages of six and 17 were in a similar situation though more responsible, while those between 18 and 24 were mainly school leavers running their own businesses.

Hawking in Nairobi is mainly done by four ethnic groups, Kikuyus (60 per cent), Luos (20 per cent), Kambas (11 per cent) and Luhyas (6 per cent). Forty-six per cent originate from the Kikuyu districts nearest Nairobi, Kiambu and Muranga, while 11 per cent said they still live in Kiambu and commute to the city to sell. More hawkers lived in Mathare (previously one of the largest and longest established illegal settlements) than any other place.

Just over half the hawkers (52 per cent) had primary education, with 26 per cent having no education at all. Only one respondent had high school education. Most of the hawkers had school age children, while only 4 per cent had children who were working and only 1 per cent said they received monetary assistance from their children. Only about one quarter (27 per cent) of the hawkers had any land elsewhere. About half (48 per cent) cultivate this land and most said they get an income of between 500-1,500 Kenya shillings (US \$ 25-70) per year from the produce. Some rented out the land.

The issue of land ownership among low income urban dwellers is difficult to assess because respondents may be speculating on the authorities allocating the land. In this survey, 73 per cent said they had no land in their rural area or anywhere else. Since the majority come from Kikuyu areas around Nairobi where pressure on land has been remarkable since the colonial era, this may well be a correct figure. The majority of the sample are young and have not acquired sufficient resources to buy land.

V. HAWKING OPERATIONS

CONTRARY TO POPULAR belief (including that of the civic authorities), hawkers in Nairobi were not found to be disorganized. The way their business is structured and conducted shows rational behaviour conducive to their survival in business and in the national economy.

There are two main categories of hawkers, licensed and unlicensed. Unlicensed hawkers can be divided into those who operate on specific

23. Chepkurui, Arap (1981), "A study of the marketing of agricultural products by roadside traders in Nairobi", unpublished MA thesis, Department of Economics, University of Nairobi

sites on the road-side or pavements, and those who are mobile. Licensed hawkers operate from specific legal sites with some built structure such as a kiosk, shade or push cart. The unlicensed hawkers who have specific illegal sites but no structures on them operate within a given area and have a specific spot for displaying her or his commodities. There are also the unlicensed hawkers who have no territory but move from place to place selling their commodities. This study concentrates on the unlicensed hawkers operating in a specific area of roadside or pavement. They had no structures except for the ones in Parklands who had shades. Within the same zone there were also mobile hawkers who are included in the survey.

Most hawkers located on pavements used nylon gunny bags for displaying their commodities. The same bags are used as containers for transporting the goods. This makes the "hide and seek" affair between the hawkers and the city *askaris* (police) more easy. Hawkers do not display all their commodities at the same time. Normally about half the goods are kept safely elsewhere. This is to safeguard against loss in the case of raids by the authorities. Hawkers located on road-sides, especially those outside the city centre, have racks and/or raised ground for displaying their commodities. Some of them use the same gunny bags as the city centre hawkers, but they spread their gunny bags over the racks instead of directly on the pavement.

Almost half (48 per cent) said they had located their sites alone, whereas 21 per cent had been assisted by friends and 8 per cent by relatives. It is interesting to note that hawkers are enterprising enough to take the initiative in locating sites. The main factor in site selection was proximity to customers (73 per cent). Only 7 per cent located their sites for proximity to residence. Hawkers make rational business decisions, and relocation attempts which do not take proximity to customers into consideration are likely to cause problems.

In contrast to the city authorities which view hawking sites as illegal, the hawkers talk about "owning" their sites. Sixty-eight percent said they "owned" their sites, meaning not legal ownership but regular operation from one spot. These spots are recognized by fellow operators and it is rare that a non-regular operator would use the same spot if the owner was absent. This is more common with road-side hawkers than those in the city centre. Indeed there is evidence of organized behaviour and amicable relationship among hawkers. No conflict over hawking sites was reported. There are informal guidelines which hawkers entering the business follow in order to avoid conflict. As a result, only 24 per cent of the 425 respondents had ever operated anywhere other than their present site. Over a third (36 per cent) had been there for over five years and 6 per cent had been in the same spot for over 18 years.

Hawkers begin work at 5.00 am, travelling to parts of the city for buying (mostly daily) goods, mainly in Gikomba and Wakulima wholesale markets. Other sources are peri-urban markets and the farming areas outside the city, especially Kiambu where 11 per cent of hawkers also live. There are peak selling times which vary depending on the area. In the three residential areas, the peak selling times are 10.30 am - 1.00 pm and 3.30 - 7.30 pm. In the city centre, there is a fair amount of lunch time business (12.30 to 2.00 pm) but the peak is from 3.30 - 7.30 pm when families are buying for the evening meal. In the industrial area, the peak is 11.30 am to 2.30 pm, when workers take their lunch. However, these hours are not static for unlicensed hawkers and may be affected by harassment from the authorities.

Most hawkers operate on a small scale with very meagre capital. Most spend about ten Kenya shillings (US \$ 0.5) a day on transport buying their perishable goods, which cost them on average 220 shillings per month. Reliable or average figures are extremely difficult to establish because of the erratic nature of the business, the level of poverty and the lack of record keeping. Just over half said they spend up to 300 shillings (US \$ 14) a month on transport, and about three-quarters (73 per cent) spend up to 200 shillings (US \$ 10) on stock purchase. Income is even harder to determine because individuals do not feel free to discuss their income. The response rate was quite good for the survey but, because expenditures generally exceeded income, this was taken as a proxy for income. Half the hawkers (50 per cent) made up to 800 shillings (US \$ 40) a month when business is good and 72 per cent made only up to 700 shillings (US \$ 35) a month when business is bad. The only variable which had any significant relationship to income was age.

As might be expected, hawkers allocate a very low proportion of their profit to increasing stock (11 per cent) or banked savings (9 per cent). Most is allocated to subsistence. This implies that unless there is external intervention to promote and develop such economic activity, it is likely to remain as a subsistence activity rather than contributing towards economic growth.

More than half the hawkers started their business without any skills (55 per cent), and of those who said they had skills when they started, almost all said they acquired them on-the-job. This implies that all training is done in the informal sector itself.

VI. CONSTRAINTS ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS

ALMOST ALL HAWKERS in Nairobi conduct business as their only source of employment and income. In this respect, hawking plays a central economic role for a significant number of households. Despite this, the survey found that hawkers face a number of problems as they struggle to survive in a hostile city environment.

The major drawback to hawking in Nairobi is lack of hawking licenses. In the sample, only 11 per cent had licenses; the rest operated illegally. This is consistent with the figure of 5,000 licenses which are issued annually as opposed to press estimates of 45,000 hawkers. City Council by-laws require hawkers to have a license which must be renewed annually. Operating without a license should lead to prosecution and conviction. In fact, it usually leads to harassment.

The most common reason given for having no license was ignorance of the requirement, followed by ignorance of the procedures for getting one. Unsuccessful attempts to get one were the third most common reason, and lack of adequate finance for a license the fourth. Well over half (58 per cent) said they could only afford a license fee of under 150 shillings (US \$ 7). Many also said they could not pay a license fee in one payment, but only monthly, weekly or daily.

Sixty-one percent of all the hawkers said they had been harassed for operating without a license. Harassment (or lack of it) is a function of location. Hawkers in Mathare and Parklands have hardly experienced any harassment despite not having licenses. On the other hand, harassment is very common within the city centre, industrial area, and Buru Buru.

The hawkers gave a number of reasons for harassment, with lack

of license (68 per cent) and poor location (14 per cent) being the dominant ones. They further gave the sources of harassment as the Nairobi City Commission (95 per cent), KANU Youth Wing (the political party) (3.5 per cent), landlords (1 per cent) and police (0.5 per cent). The nature of harassment included goods being snatched (75 per cent), conviction (10 per cent), demand for bribe (8 per cent), and demolition of shelter (3 per cent). In cases where goods are snatched, the hawkers often try to bribe the enforcement officers to get their goods back. This is common except in large scale operations organized by the City Inspectorate office. Often, enforcement officers are given bribes before they resort to harassment. In Mathare, it was revealed that hawkers pay the KANU Youth Wing a minimal fee to avoid harassment.

Demolitions are usually seasonal. The time when the survey was conducted was not the season for demolitions, which is why the incidence was low. Another reason is that few in the sample had structures.

Despite the hawkers' efforts to undertake business within a hostile environment, they were found to have no strong association representing their interests. Only 18 per cent belonged to some form of business association. The associations mainly help members financially, and to a lesser extent socially. The predominant type was the revolving fund, mostly operated by women. A further probe into whether hawkers knew any organization in the city which is an advocate for their interests showed that only 4 per cent knew of such an association and even fewer were members. This is contrary to the claims of the "Wanainchi Hawkers and Traders Association" which has been playing the role of advocate for hawkers' interests since independence. For many years, the association did not admit unlicensed hawkers as members. Coupled with the fact that it has never undertaken an aggressive membership drive, this may explain why hawkers are unaware of it.

VII. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO assist the informal sector have mainly focused on small scale manufacturing enterprises, on the grounds that they have potential for growth and employment creation. However, this ignores the fact that they are skill intensive. Hawking is not skill intensive, which is why it is an easier activity than small scale manufacturing for people to enter, and why so many urban dwellers rely on it as their sole source of livelihood.

Central government moves - such as the 1986 "Economic Management for Renewed Growth"⁽²⁴⁾, the 1989-93 Development Plan⁽²⁵⁾ and the Small Scale Enterprises and Small Industries Development Programmes - have not been echoed by similar moves in local authorities. Central government initiatives have therefore had no impact on hawkers' conditions, especially unlicensed hawkers. As the city authorities continue with unabated harassment, punitive measures and hardly any dialogue, the contradiction becomes ever more apparent. The authorities' actions disrupt and sometimes completely halt business, leading to inadequate or no income for the hawkers. Although no assessment was made of alternatives, one may assume that hawkers are tempted into other less legal or morally acceptable activities.

Three major policy implications were inferred from this research:

24. Republic of Kenya (1986), *Economic Management for Renewed Growth*, Government Printer, Nairobi

25. Republic of Kenya (1989), *Development Plan 1989/93*

licensing, hawking sites and harassment. They are of course inter-linked. The city by-laws require licensing, which means a specific site, recognized and allocated by the city. It also implies freedom from harassment, although this is not always the case as licensed hawkers are also sometimes harassed.

Licensing of hawkers has always been controversial and political. The question of who gets a license or a City Commission stall attracts a great number of interested parties. The fact that the number of licenses issued has been kept at 5,000 for the last decade, despite rapidly increasing numbers of hawkers, increases the focus on patronage. The survey finding that most hawkers do not know the licensing requirements and procedures means that they are at a distinct disadvantage and cannot be expected to satisfy the city's requirements. The survey shows that hawkers are willing to pay a licensing fee, but are not able to make a lump sum payment annually because their incomes are very low and barely cover subsistence.

Most official markets open at 9.00 am and close at 6.00 pm, which does not suit most urban workers who have to leave home between 6.00 and 7.00 am in order to get to work at 8.00 am. By 6.00 pm when the markets close, most workers are still trying to get through congested public transport, or are walking home. The service that hawkers provide on pavements and roadside is, on the other hand, very appropriate to such needs. The city market is too expensive for most workers and most residential estates have been privately developed and provide no public facilities such as markets. The hardest hit consumers are those on very low incomes without refrigerators who have to buy every day. There seems to be no rationale for the city harassing hawkers who cater to consumers' needs, especially since curio sellers who cater to tourist needs are given a hearing and options on where to trade.

The financing of harassment raises some policy issues. It is ironic that an authority that constantly faces financial constraints can afford to deploy *askaris* to harass hawkers even after normal working hours. It is even more ironic to note that lorries are often on standby to transport hawkers' confiscated goods, while garbage may lie uncollected for weeks.

Financing of hawking businesses is often raised as an issue though not by the hawkers themselves: they indicated that if harassment were to stop, business would be good, except for the lack of shelter which disrupts activities during the rainy season. Funding agencies, including NGOs, believe that credit for small business is a priority. However, they might better address the creation of an environment more conducive to business, and assisting hawkers to form strong, self-supporting associations for financial ventures as well as advocacy. This can only be done in close association with the city authorities, other development agencies and the hawkers themselves.

VIII. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS SHOULD be published in both Kiswahili and English and widely distributed to the general public. Awareness of the by-laws should also be created. The number of hawkers licensed should be reviewed with a view to increasing it. Two categories of license should be established. The current approach could be continued for the better off hawkers who can afford to invest in structures, but the license period should be reviewed with a view to extending it

to at least three years. This would allow such hawkers to operate for a longer period without fear of losing their license. The less well-off hawkers, who are the main concern of this research, should be allocated a cheaper license, also valid for a longer period such as three years, but payable in instalments.

Hawking sites within the city should be reviewed and ratified, as is done for curio hawkers and cars. An option previously suggested is the double use of car parks. Since hawking in the city mostly peaks in the evening, re-planning to require car owners to leave certain parks at an appropriate time should be considered. The selective use of road reserves should be developed for residential areas. This has been accepted by the authorities in Parklands and there seems to be no validity in rejecting it in other parts of the city not served by formal markets. In the industrial area where unlicensed cooked food sellers provide workers with a cheap lunch, the authorities should only concern themselves with ensuring that hygienic conditions are maintained. In almost all cases of food selling observed in the area, there was no littering, nor were any structures erected. The women simply provide food which has been cooked in their own residential areas.

The city authorities should design a more appropriate method of apprehending hawkers who have committed violations than the current method of "hide and seek". One option would be to charge an unlicensed hawker by giving a ticket as is done for traffic offenses by car owners. This would entail no on-the-spot loss of goods, but would require the new system of licensing first being put in place and a public awareness campaign.

Hawkers should be assisted to form strong associations which are self-run, able to protect their interests and offer security for transactions. Assistance could come from NGOs collaborating with the city and relevant central government agencies. Credit should be available for hawkers so that they can expand their businesses. This can be through NGOs, finance institutions or the hawkers' organization itself.

Finally, the closing times for city markets should be reviewed to make them more convenient to city workers.

The key point is to call for the political will from the civic authorities to create an enabling environment for hawkers. Only then can the other recommendations, and the overall review of the by-laws, be achieved.