

Migration to the cities and new vulnerabilities

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Understanding diversity and complexity among migrants

- Wealthier rural residents migrate permanently to the cities for work and education
- Poorest rural groups are more likely to migrate to local towns and other rural areas, temporarily or seasonally
- Women heading their households are a large proportion of rural-urban female migrants
- But also growing numbers of rural groups who lose their livelihoods move to urban centres
- As well as IDPs (conflicts and environmental change)

Diversity in the forms of migration

- Urban to urban migration a significant share of movement – often two-thirds of all migrants
- Still a large share of circular and temporary migrants – possibly the most vulnerable because they are often excluded from full citizenship rights
- Increasing cross-border regional migration (eg in Southern Africa), exposing migrants to xenophobia
- Net in-migration to a city can hide significant out-migration
- Most cities have a mix of all, making it difficult to devise specific policies for ‘migrants’

Data on urban poverty and disadvantage, and migration

- Data on urban disadvantage based on income/assets, housing and access to basic services
- Sometimes disaggregated by sex, age and ethnic group – but NOT by migrant status
- Very large data gaps also on populations living in informal settlements, the homeless and those living at their workplace
- In some cities, one-half to three-quarters of the population live in informal settlements – but not all of them are migrants

Migrants' disadvantage: incomes

- No significant differences with non-migrants among non-poor groups – not all migrants are poor
- But higher overall levels of income poverty (2/3 of all poor in Vietnam's main cities are migrants) – migrants are a large proportion of the urban poor
- High levels of unstable, informal employment
- Migrant households are more likely to be food insecure than non-migrants – but both are disturbingly high in Southern Africa (78 and 65%)
- In many cases, migrants reduce their own living costs to support rural relatives

Access to housing and shelter

- A large proportion of migrants in low-income settlements, but with important variations
- Older settlements are often home to lower-middle income groups - who lived there for several generations after migration (eg 'notified slums' in India)
- More recent settlements are more often home to recent migrants and people displaced within the city (eg Old Fadama in Accra), often tenants
- The latter are more likely to have inadequate shelter, basic infrastructure and access to services

A notified slum in Bangalore



A 'first generation' slum in Bangalore



Non-income poverty in low-income urban settlements

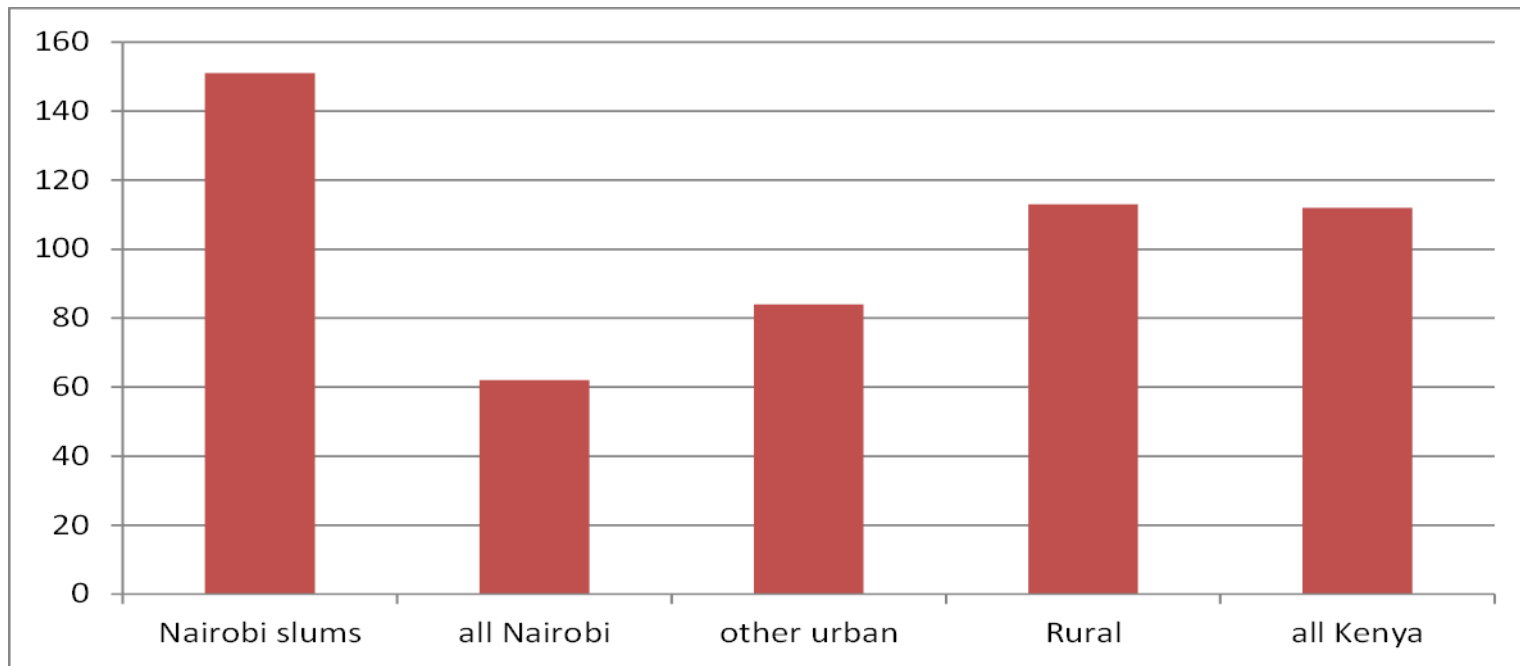
- Very large data gaps on people living in these settlements
- The settlements themselves often do not officially exist (but can be home to as much as 70 percent of the city's population – as in Dar es Salaam)
- Lack of basic infrastructure has huge impacts on health, especially child mortality rates and stunting
- Environmental hazards are substantial as many settlements are in marginal areas subject to flooding and landslides

Women migrating on their own: a more vulnerable group?

- An increase in the independent migration of women as shown by urban sex ratios – but with regional variations
- A higher proportion of women headed households among migrants – push factors
- More employment opportunities, but often in low-paid, insecure jobs (gender-segmented labour markets)
- In informal settlements, additional burdens due to lack of basic services and infrastructure, and risk of gender-based violence

Infant and child mortality rates in Kenya

(source: APHRC, 2002)



Environmental hazards in Mathare, Nairobi



Environmental hazards in Old Fadama, Accra



The challenge for city governments

- City and municipal governments have a huge importance in addressing the needs of their residents
- But in many cases lack resources and capacity, and perhaps most importantly political will
- Smaller urban centres often have even less capacities and resources, yet are demographically important (and also attract migrants)
- Blaming urban poverty on migrants is not realistic: but while not all migrants are poor, in many cities they are a large proportion of the urban poor

Local initiatives to reduce risk

- Risk as the outcome of exposure and vulnerability – both need to be better understood in urban contexts
- Need for more accurate data on low-income settlements and groups – eg mapping and enumerations – including migrant status
- Most strong urban poverty reduction programmes are place based, with a focus on tenure, housing, basic services
- Migrants are more likely to be included where these programmes are city-wide (and nation-wide)
- Baan Mankong in Thailand; over 100,000 ‘slum’ households
- Asian Coalition for Community Action: over 1,000 community initiatives in 18 countries
- 30+ national federations of slum/shack dwellers, all with mostly women-managed savings group at base, all with many initiatives (where possible with local government)