

# Rural Out-Migration to Urban Uncertainties in Kenya

## FACT SHEET

### BACKGROUND

The study, *'Rural Out-migration to Urban Uncertainties in Kenya,'* was conducted in Siaya and Vihiga counties by the **African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC)** under the **Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium (MOP/RPC)** between September 2012 and October 2012. It investigated the push factors at the place of origin (rural areas) and the pull factors at the destination (urban areas) in order to understand the nature and extent to which rural-urban migration alleviates or aggravates poverty. It outlined the factors influencing rural-urban migration and their relation to poverty. In addition, the study explored the migration experiences by gender to determine whether there are similarities and differences in rural-urban migration for men and women.

### OBJECTIVES

**Overall objective:**

To investigate out-migration from rural counties of Siaya and Vihiga to the urban areas of Kisumu and Nairobi

**Specific objectives:**

- To investigate rural out-migration determinants in the two counties and urban in-migration of male and female migrants to the two cities;
- To identify demographic, gender and socioeconomic characteristics of migrants in so far as they initiate and consequently, facilitate migration to Kisumu and Nairobi;
- To identify and understand the mechanisms used by male and female migrants to maintain links with their rural roots at the individual, household and community levels;
- To examine the extent and nature of rural-urban migration in eradicating or propagating poverty reduction of rural households as well as male and female migrants' welfare in urban environments; and
- To make appropriate recommendations to both counties and the two cities on out-migration and in-migration respectively and how best to evolve the synchronised migration management between the origins and destinations.

### FINDINGS

- Majority of the migrants are the youth (18-40 years old). Of this proportion, 62.5 per cent were male migrants aged between 15 and 29 years old at the time of outmigration whereas women in the same age bracket constituted 25 per cent. These migrants include those pursuing further education and job seekers who cannot find employment in the rural areas;
- Most migrants are single but some are married women who have to contend with perceptions of having abandoned their families at home;
- Women and men migrate for similar reasons: employment opportunities, education, escaping inadequate infrastructure and access to basic amenities;
- Lack of employment in the cities is the core challenge for migrants while the high cost of living comes second. Most migrants cannot find employment in the formal sectors and make do with informal sector employment where the pay is inadequate. Women also have to contend with exploitation and fear of physical or sexual abuse;

- Rural-urban migration to an extent alleviates poverty by improving migrants' livelihood or that of their families; and
- However, rural-urban migration also causes proliferation of slums in the urban destinations where poverty reigns. Here, migrants have to contend with problems, such as, poor sanitation, insecurity and poor housing.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Engage migrants and non-migrants in county-based initiatives based on carefully crafted strategies and policies for economic development and general improvement of livelihoods;
- County governments should develop rural development strategies to create more employment opportunities at the county level for non-migrants and attract potential return migrants;
- County governments should use evidence from the study as basis for formulating policies on rural-urban migration and return migration; and
- Repair poor infrastructure (roads, ICT system, energy supplies and waterway systems) and install new ones in rural areas to enhance development and rural-urban links.

## RESEARCH EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- **Policy brief**
  - *'Rural Out-migration to Urban Uncertainties in Kenya'* (pending)
- **Working Paper**
  - *'Is Migration the Solution to Poverty Alleviation in Kenya? The Rural-Urban Migration Experiences of Migrants from Western Kenya to Kisumu and Nairobi.'* (Unedited version is available online on <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/publications/workingpapers> )

Visit the AMADPOC website [www.amadpoc.org](http://www.amadpoc.org) and the Migrating out of Poverty website <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/> for updates on these and other projects.

## ABOUT THE AFRICAN MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY CENTRE (AMADPOC)

The **African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC)** was established in 2008, AMADPOC is a think-tank in the migration-development nexus, whose mission is to influence research on issues of migration-development, boost capacity of African countries and development partners in the corridors of national governments, inter-governmental cooperation and research institutions. For more information on AMADPOC's activities, go to our website on [www.amadpoc.org](http://www.amadpoc.org) or contact us on [contact@amadpoc.org](mailto:contact@amadpoc.org).

## ABOUT THE MIGRATING OUT OF POVERTY RESEARCH PROGRAMME CONSORTIUM

The Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium (MOP/RPC) is a 7-year research programme funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). It focuses on the relationship between regional and internal migration and poverty. Its goal is to maximise the poverty-reducing impacts of migration while minimising the risks of migrating for the poor. Attaining this involves creating new datasets, engaging with policymakers, and enhancing capacity to understand as well as research migration and poverty. The consortium consists of six partner research institutions across six regions: AMADPOC (East Africa); the African Centre for Migration and Research (South Africa); the Asia Research Institute (South East Asia), the Centre for Migration Studies (West Africa); the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (South Asia), and the University of Sussex. For more information on the Consortium, please visit <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/>.

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