Development, migration and inclusive urbanisation

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Urbanisation, migration and socio-economic change

• Urbanisation is context-specific: local variations within a global process can be substantial (including de-urbanisation)
• In LMICs, net rural-urban migration is a key driver of urbanisation and is linked to rural transformation (especially in small towns)
• Economic growth in the past 60 years has been in non-agricultural sectors, located in urban areas (economies of scale and agglomeration)
The links between economic growth and urbanisation

National levels of urbanisation and per capita income, 1980 and 2010

Source: (McGranahan and Satterthwaite 2014)
Urbanisation, urban growth and urban poverty

- In LMICs, rapid urban growth is often accompanied by rapid urban expansion of unplanned settlements housing a very large proportion of the population.
- Resulting in substantial shortages in the provision of adequate housing, basic infrastructure and services, over-crowding and congestion and increasing exposure to environmental hazards.
- Heavy impacts on health and nutrition, especially children’s.
- Gendered impacts as care burden results in time poverty.
- Income and non-income urban poverty a growing concern for national and local governments.
Environmental hazards in Mathare, Nairobi
Migration and urban poverty

• Are migrants responsible for urban poverty?
• Migrants are over-represented among the urban poor – but not all migrants are poor
• There is a huge diversity in composition, destinations and durations of migrant flows
• Non-income poverty factors similar to that of non-migrants
• Additional disadvantage often relates to exclusion from social protection and other citizenship rights
A notified slum in Bangalore

A ‘first generation’ slum in Bangalore

Migrant women in the cities

• A growing proportion, linked to changes in global and domestic labour markets
• But with significant regional variations
• Disadvantages are both in the productive realm (gender-segmented labour markets) and in the reproductive sphere (care economy) for residents of informal settlements
• Higher proportion of women-headed households than in rural areas (but not necessarily worse-off than male-headed)
Migration and inclusive urbanisation

- Can reducing migration reduce urban poverty? Evidence does not suggest this is the case
- Migration (and policies) linked to economic growth models and their socio-economic corollaries
- Addressing urban poverty rather than migration may be more effective
- Full citizenship rights for diverse low-income groups are a first step towards inclusive urbanisation
- Collaboration between local governments and civil society, grassroots organisations key to provide space-based data and innovative solutions
Thank you

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