

Nairobi represents a city associated with not only high urban growth through migration but also, the concentration of migrants in large informal settlements. Its population increased from 120,000 in 1948 to about 3 million today, with 60 percent estimated to be living in slum settlements where poverty and the prevailing environmental conditions expose children to high morbidity and poor schooling outcomes. In spite of this, Nairobi, as the major labour center in Kenya, is still attractive to many migrants.

Migration into Nairobi is characteristically made up of young people in search of better livelihood opportunities in the city. These are largely men who move into the city, usually alone, leaving behind their families in the place of origin. Other families however choose to move into the city with all household members (de Laat, 2005). Both migration strategies could have implications for school attendance/continuation of the children in these migrant families. Some research has shown that recently migrated individuals compared to those who have lived longer in the slums fare poorly economically either due to lack of employment or engaging in poorly paying jobs (Eliya et al, under review).

As has been indicated in studies elsewhere, migrant children face not only a change in school but also in their living environment. With most migrants into Nairobi originating from rural areas of the country, a move into the urban slums is a major environmental change for all members of the migrant household but more so for children. This major change in the living environment has a more negative impact on grade progression of children migrating into large urban centers from rural communities than those moving from one rural community to another (Pribesh & Downey 1999).

Slum communities in sub-Saharan Africa face a host of challenges, among them poor enrollment rates in school, high rates of school drop out, involvement in risky behavior among young people, high rates of unemployment, insecurity, as well as inadequate or non-existent public educational and health facilities/services (APHRC, 2002). Given the growing number of migrants into urban centers who most often end up living in the slums, the government faces the challenge of meeting some of the millennium development goals, for instance, the provision of universal education for all. The

unofficial status given to slum settlements adds more to the challenges since there is little government investment in public services to residents. Therefore, slums may fare even worse in terms of schooling and other outcomes compared to rural communities where public schools are available. People moving from rural to urban slum communities therefore are faced with the double challenge of adjusting to a hostile living environment as well as having to deal with a lack of public schools where their children can enroll.

Most of the migration and education literature is based on mobility into better environments. However, this study will be looking at a situation that is unique – mobility into a poorer physical environment and areas lacking in educational facilities and resources. It will be well placed to highlight of schooling outcomes of children who move into city slums alone or with their parents or guardians.

Objectives

The objective of this study is to assess whether the migration status of children has an impact on their schooling outcomes.

Data and Methods

This study uses in-migration data collected in the Nairobi Urban Health and Demographic Surveillance System (NUHDSS) from 2003 to 2005. The data contains information on place of origin of migrants, age and reason for moving into the community. It also contains details about parental survival status for each migrant as well as information on whether children moved alone or with their parents or guardians. Detailed education data comes from a retrospective study carried out in the two communities where the NUHDSS is running, the Education Research Program (ERP). ERP collects information on enrollment, grade progression and dropout rates in slum and non-slum communities in Nairobi, among other information. Data being used were collected in 2005 and covered a period of six years retrospectively.

The datasets contain rich information on the effects of migration into slum communities on i) enrolment, ii) grade progression and iii) drop out of migrant children. It is worth

noting that the slum population is mainly made up of migrants, so we distinguish between recent migrants who have been defined as those moving into the slum after January 2004, and long-term residents, who were in the community since before January 2004.

Appropriate descriptive statistics were used to describe the outcomes and the sample under consideration. Logistic regression models were fitted for all outcomes, with migration status as the main independent variable while controlling for age, sex, ethnicity and household wealth. This enabled us to identify how migration status influences schooling outcomes of interest in the two communities.

Results

Those living in Viwandani are 64% more likely to be enrolled in school compared to those in Korogocho. Age and ethnic background are also predictors of enrollment, therefore slum differences might be as a result of the age and ethnicity of participants. Also the effect of parental education capital on schooling outcomes of children may be manifest in the slum differences since as mentioned earlier: Viwandani tends to attract people who are more educated compared to Korogocho and are therefore more likely to take their children to school.

Children who come from households in the wealthiest quintiles are 42% more likely to be enrolled compared to those whose households are poorest. This is an expected effect because most schools in the two communities are privately run.

Grade progression is predicted by age, migration status and sex. Recent migrants are 54% less likely to progress from one grade to the next compared to long-term residents.

The results show that the migration status of the children is important in determining if a child remains in school or not. Recently migrated children though being less likely to progress well through the grades; they are less likely to drop out of school.