

**INTERNAL MIGRATION AND IMPROVED  
WELL BEING?:  
EVIDENCE FROM TWO INFORMAL  
SETTLEMENTS IN URBAN GHANA**

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# Introduction

- Ghana's population is becoming increasingly urbanized. Proportion of population in urban areas was:
  - *44% in 2000*
  - *51% in 2010*
  - *and projected to increase to 63% in 2025 (GSS, 2012)*
- Although the causes of this rapid urbanisation are multifaceted, rural-urban migration is contributing to population growth in many urban centres.
- Recent population census reports suggest an emptying of the population of the poorer regions into Accra and other relatively well-developed regions of Ghana (GSS 2012).

## Relative Share of Population and Inter-Censal Growth Rates by Region, 1960-2010

Region	Relative Share of Population					Annual Growth Rates (%)			
	1960	1970	1984	2000	2010	1960-1970	1970-1984	1984-2000	2000-2010
All Regions	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.5
Western	9.3	9.0	9.4	10.2	9.6	2.1	3.0	3.2	2.0
Central	11.2	10.4	9.3	8.4	8.9	1.7	1.8	2.1	3.1
<b>Greater Accra</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Volta	11.6	11.1	9.8	8.6	8.6	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.5
Eastern	15.5	14.1	13.7	11.1	10.7	1.5	2.4	1.4	2.1
<b>Ashanti</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Brong-Ahafo	8.7	9.0	9.8	9.6	9.4	2.7	3.3	2.5	2.3
Northern	7.9	8.5	9.5	9.6	10.1	3.2	3.4	2.5	2.9
Upper East	7.0	6.3	6.3	4.9	4.2	1.5	2.6	1.1	1.2
Upper West	4.3	3.7	3.6	3.0	2.8	1.0	2.3	1.7	1.9
<b>National</b>	<b>6,726,815</b>	<b>8,559,313</b>	<b>12,296,018</b>	<b>18,912,079</b>	<b>24,685,823</b>				

# Introduction cont

- Migration and urbanisation trends are occurring at the same time as declining levels of poverty across the country.
- At the national level, the proportion of the poor declined from 51.7% in 1992 to 39.5% in 1999, and 28.5% in 2006.
- Recent evidence, however, indicates increasing levels of poverty in urban Ghana. Accra more than doubled its standard poverty incidence (4.4% in 1999 to 10.6% in 2006) and extreme poverty incidence rose from 1.3% in 1999 to 4.4% in 2006.

- The increase in urban poverty has been partly attributed to net migration of poor migrants to the city. Simplistic assumption that rural-urban migrants transfer poverty to the cities.
- As a result, policy prescription has largely focused on curbing rural-urban migration. - a widely held perception that, rural-urban migration cannot lead to positive outcomes for migrants, their areas of origin or destination.
- Migrants in slums are particularly blamed for urban poverty.
- Yet evidence of the linkages between urbanisation, rural-urban migration and poverty outcomes is mixed.
- **As part of migration out of poverty project, this study examines how the migration of poor people into urban slums in Accra impacts on poverty outcomes, access to services, economic and social opportunities and the barriers that they face in the urban areas.**

# Conceptual Issues

## ***Migration***

- The study defines a migrant as someone who has moved and settled in an area for at least six months

## ***Poverty***

- Assets approach was used to analyse poverty (see Moser 1998; Ferguson et al. 2007; Doss et al. 2008)
- Data was collected on income but analysis also focused on migrants own assessment of wellbeing.

# Research Methods and Data Sources

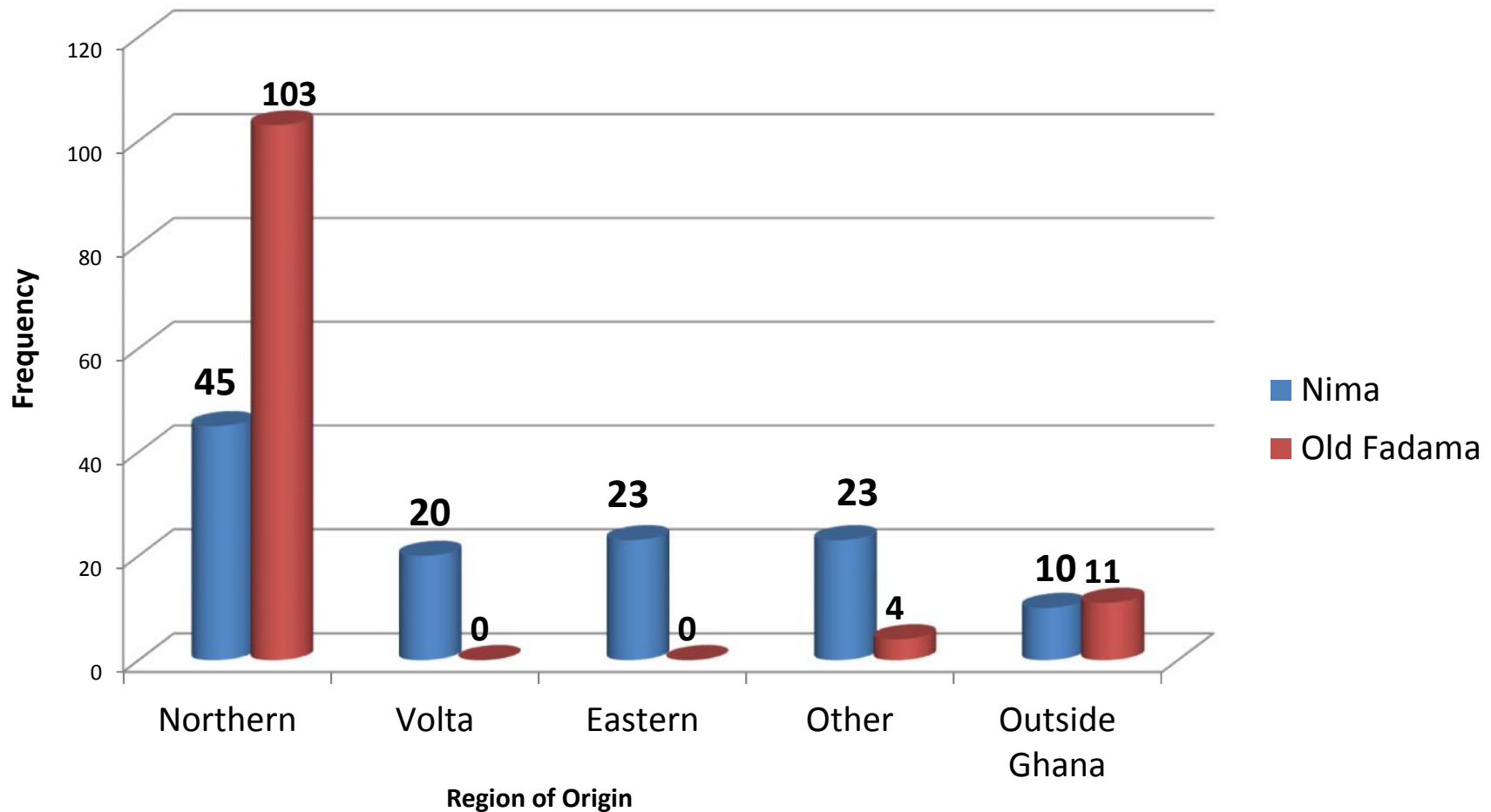
- Study communities
  - Two informal migrant communities in Accra - Nima and Old Fadama
  - Nima - a poor neighbourhood which emerged in the 1940s, is a melting pot of ethnic groups and nationalities, especially from northern Ghana and West Africa Sahelian countries of Mali, Niger and Burkina, Nigeria.
  - Old Fadama is a poor migrant community, which dates to the mid-1990s and built with shacks.

# Methods of data collection

- Sequential mixed methods design was adopted.
- Questionnaire survey among 239 migrant households (Old Fadama, 121; Nima 118). Multistage sampling strategy was used.
- In-depth interviews with 45 migrants and 14 key informants.
- Focus group discussions ( 2 in each community).



# Distribution of migrants by Region of origin



**Three northern regions = 61.9% ; Volta = 8.4%; Eastern = 9.6%; All other Regions =11.3%; Outside Ghana (Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria = 8.8%**

## Reasons for migrating to Accra

Reason for Migrating to Accra	Gender of Respondent		Total
	Male	Female	
Education	19(13.5%)	2(2.0%)	21(8.8%)
Family related	11(7.8%)	9(9.2%)	20(8.4%)
To flee conflict	3(2.1%)	2(2.0%)	5(2.1%)
Marriage related	3(2.1%)	11(11.2%)	14(5.9%)
Economic Opportunities	97(68.8%)	66(67.3%)	163(68.2%)
Others	8(5.7%)	8(8.2%)	16(6.7%)
Total	141(100.0%)	98(100.0%)	239(100.0%)

## Migrants Living Environments and Access to Basic Services

- Most of the migrants were living in poor housing structures (*shack or other temporal structures*). They experienced insecure tenancy, frequent fires, threat of eviction by city authorities.

Type of House	Neighbourhood		Total
	Nima	Old Fadama	
House/Apartment in residential area	1 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)
House/Apartment in slum	3 (2.7%)	1 (0.8%)	4 (1.7%)
Room in a house in residential area	56 (50.0%)	14 (11.9%)	70 (30.4%)
Room in a house in Slum	40 (35.7%)	14 (11.9%)	54 (23.5%)
<b>Shack or other temp structure in slum</b>	<b>8 (7.1%)</b>	<b>89 (75.4%)</b>	<b>97 (42.2%)</b>
Shack or other temp structure elsewhere	1 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)
Other	3 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>112 (100.0%)</b>	<b>118 (100.0%)</b>	<b>230 (100.0%)</b>



## Shacks and other temporal structures, poor sanitation

<b>Availability of Basic Services</b>				
<b>Availability Of Services</b>	<b>Nima</b>	<b>Old Fadama</b>	<b>Total</b>	
Water	Within residence	33(28.0%)	9 (7.7%)	42(17.9%)
	Within residence but not reliable	14(11.9%)	0 (0.0%)	14(6.0%)
	<b>Not available in residence</b>	<b>71 (60.2%)</b>	<b>108 (92.3%)</b>	<b>179(76.2%)</b>
	Total	118 (100.0%)	117(100.0%)	235 (100.0%)
Toilet Facilities	Within residence	42(35.6%)	6(5.1%)	48(20.4%)
	Within residence but not reliable	2(1.7%)	1(9%)	3(1.3%)
	<b>Not available in residence</b>	<b>74(62.7%)</b>	<b>110(94.0%)</b>	<b>184(78.3%)</b>
	Total	118 (100.0%)	117(100.0%)	235(100.0%)
Bath House	Within residence	103(90.4%)	12(10.5%)	115(50.4%)
	Within residence but not reliable	4(3.5%)	1(0.9%)	5(2.2%)
	<b>Not available in residence</b>	<b>7(6.1%)</b>	<b>101(88.6%)</b>	<b>108(47.4%)</b>
	Total	114 (100.0%)	114(100.0%)	228(100.0%)
Electricity 08/05/2014	<b>Within residence</b>	<b>107(90.7%)</b>	<b>101(86.3%)</b>	<b>208(88.5%)</b>
	Within residence but not reliable	2(1.7%)	13(11.1%)	15(6.4%)
	Not available in residence	9(7.6%)	3(2.6%)	12(5.1%)
	Total	118(100.0%)	117(100.0%)	235(100.0%)

# Unavailability of Services

- City authorities classify Old Fadama as temporal/illegal settlement.
- Migrants fear ejections and hence not willing to invest in these services.
- Some migrants pay higher for accommodation than in rich neighborhoods, but requirement for huge deposits make it difficult for them to rent decent accommodation.
- Migrants actually pay higher for water and toilets than those in rich settlements.



Private bath houses for commercial purposes in Old Fadama. 50p (\$.25) each time they have to bath

## Migrant Urban Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship

- Slums were booming with various forms of entrepreneurial businesses and activities mostly in the informal sector.
- Type of entrepreneurship in the informal sector were gendered.
- **Men**
  - artisans, labourers in the construction sector, operation of motor bikes as taxis (*okada*), *truck pushers*, and collection and sale of metal scraps (i.e. e-waste business), video operators
- **Women**
  - Petty traders, food vending, catering (chop bar) assistants, shop assistants, hair dressers, head porters (Kayayei) and plaiting hair, domestic workers





## Migrants in the e-waste business



## Livelihoods and entrepreneurship in urban slums



# Income levels

- **Irregular, but higher incomes than at places of origin.**

*“It is now better for me than before migration to Accra because back home in the North I was not doing any work. Even though when I started working it was not moving on as well as I had expected, I am now happily working, able to save some money and remit money to my family back in the north. ... [In addition] “My child has benefited a lot from my migration to this place because I am now able to provide for all his educational needs”*

- **Average income of 10.1 Ghana cedis (5 dollars); Median income of 5.4 Ghana cedis. Both were above the minimum wage.**
- **Some migrants, especially in E-waste business, earn far higher than civil servants in Ghana ( see the case of Mashud).**

## ***Migrants in the E-Waste Business: The case of Mashud***

*Mashud is a 32 year old migrant from Nigeria. He has a wife and three children living in Nigeria. He came to Ghana in 2010. He heard about the e-waste business in Ghana from his friends in Nigeria. After working with them for a year, he saved enough money which he used to buy his own container and some tools to start his own business. He is now an E-waste refurbisher who buys old computers and sells the wires and other parts to a Chinese company in Tema.*

***Mashud reported that he earns an average of between 300 Ghana cedis (\$150) and 500 Ghana Cedis (\$250) each day. Within the few years that he has worked in Ghana, he has bought a taxi cab, a plot of land in Accra and hopes to start the construction of a house by the end of this year. He knows at least two migrant scrap dealers from Nigeria who have built their houses from the same business. Mashud also remits between 400 Ghana cedis (\$200) and 800 Ghana cedis (\$400) to his wife and parents back in Nigeria every month.***

*Mashud concluded that the E-waste business is the most lucrative job, although he also admits that this job is tedious.*

## Assets Accumulation by migrants

<b>Assets</b>	<b>Number owning asset before migration</b>	<b>Number owning assets after migration</b>
Stove	21 (8.8%)	29 (12.1%)
<b>Refrigerator</b>	<b>69 (28.9%)</b>	<b>104 (43.5%)</b>
Fan	111(46.4%)	186 (77.8%)
Radio/Recorder	170 (71.1 )	154 (64.4%)
Iron	81(33.9%)	140 (58.6%)
Bicycle	121(50.6%)	59 (24.7%)
Motor Cycle	65 (27.2%)	40 (16.7%)
<b>Mobile Phone</b>	<b>98 (41.0%)</b>	<b>209 (87.4%)</b>
TV	110 (46.0%)	169 (70.7%)
<b>DVD/VCD Player</b>	<b>58 (24.3%)</b>	<b>128(53.6%)</b>
Washing machine	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.3%)
Land*	68 (28.5%)	29 (12.1%)
Car/Truck/Bus	2 (0.8%)	11(4.6%)

# Household Savings

- Over 76% in the two communities save
- There were no significant gender differentials in the proportion of respondents with savings, as 77% of males and 75% of females had savings.
- However, the proportion was as high as over 85% in Old Fadama and nearly 67% in Nima.
- Respondents in Old Fadama recorded high savings due to constant threats of eviction by city authorities and persistent fire out break in the community

# Remittances

- Households in Nima and Old Fadama engage in both in-transfer (receiving) and out-transfer (sending) of remittances
- 24% received remittances whereas 78% sent remittances within last 12 months.
- Remittances sent were both in cash and in kind.
- Men were just as likely as females to send remittances (81.6% of men and 78.1% of female )
- Informal channels were mainly used for remitting to families and households. These include the use of friends and relatives; transport operators, mainly drivers who ply between migrants' places of origin and destination. Also combined use of both formal and informal channels.

***“I have a friend there [place of origin] who is a teacher so I put the money into his account, and then he withdraws it and gives it to them family/household], that is if he [friend] is around. In cases when he is not around and has travelled I send the money to them [family/household] through the station buses” (Taka)***



# Migration and Well-being

- Irrespective of community of residence, gender and duration of stay, majority of migrants believed that overall well-being of their households had improved after migrating to Accra. 88% assessed their overall household life as ‘improved a lot/somewhat improved’.
- Only 7.4 percent of households assessed the overall life of their households as somewhat deteriorated/deteriorated a lot after moving to Accra
- *“Migration has been helpful to me based on the things that I told you I have gotten. And even though migration has not improved my education, through migration I have been able to continuously support the education of my brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews at home” (Hamza, Old Fadama).*

## Assessment of Overall well-being after Moving to Accra by Location (%)

Responses	Nima	Old Fadama	Total
Improved a lot	50.9	48.2	49.6
Somewhat Improved	40.5	36.0	38.3
Remained the same	3.4	6.1	4.8
Somewhat deteriorated	4.3	8.8	6.5
Deteriorated a lot	0.9	0.9	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of respondents	116	114	230

## Assessment of Overall wellbeing after Moving to Accra (%) by Sex

Responses	Male	Female
Improved a lot	47.9%	29.2%
Somewhat Improved	37.9%	56.3
Remained the same	9.3%	5.2
Somewhat deteriorated	4.3%	9.6
Deteriorated a lot	0.7%	0.0
Total	140	98
Number of respondents	100.0%	100.0%

Men were slightly more likely than women to report that their overall wellbeing after moving to Accra has *improved a lot* (47.9% versus 29.2%)

## Conclusions: Key Messages (1)

- Despite the neglect of informal settlements such as Nima and Old Fadama by city authorities and the state in terms of infrastructure and services, migrants continue to flood these communities because of improved livelihood opportunities in Accra.
- Using their own ingenuity, the migrants build houses, create jobs in the informal sector and through that they survive and live in Accra. The migrants are also contributing positively to poverty reduction and human capital development back home through remittances , savings and investments.
- Although migration is not without its sacrifices, majority of migrants, despite living in a harsh environment with little social protection, perceived their overall well-being to have improved significantly as a result of migration.

## Conclusions: Key Messages (2)

- Urban slums are not just places of despair and misery, but also places where migrants are optimistically making the most of their capabilities, despite obvious difficulties and trying to move out of poverty.
- Yet, development policies continue to regard rural-urban migration as negative, largely leading to an increase in urban poverty and therefore urge the need to reduce rural-urban migration.
- These viewpoints can be problematic as they are often based on a very crude method of measuring poverty via a **head count of the poor**, and furthermore do not provide a holistic assessment of the dynamics behind the movement of poor people to urban areas to access more remunerative opportunities and the beneficial impact that this is having on their families.
- Migrants may not be rich by national income levels, but they are better off in the urban areas. They are living in “two worlds” just as some poor migrants in developed countries .

## Policy implications

- Policies aimed at curbing rural-urban migration are bound to fail, unless spatial inequalities in development are addressed.
- There is a need for national policy shifts on upgrading slums. This will be more appropriate than attempts to clear them.
- Provision of basic services in slums
- Promoting rural and broad-based regional development to reduce spatial inequalities
- *Support informal sector.*

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