

URBAN MIGRANTS
AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

J.O. Oucho

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Preface

There is incessant controversy surrounding the role played by urban migrants in rural development in the developing countries in view of sporadic empirical evidence on the subject. Students of migration and rural development are sharply divided between those surmising that urban migrants contribute nothing to, if not deny, rural areas of development potential and those contending that migrants do participate in rural development in accordance with the prevalent socio-economic climate. The situation differs from region to region, country to country and from one part to another part of any given country.

This book provides evidence that urban migrants play an important role in rural development at both household and community levels. The conclusion is based on a survey of two notable out-migration districts in Western Kenya, whose out-migrants were traced and interviewed in Nairobi and Kisumu, Kenya's first and third cities respectively. The data used in the study have been supplemented by data from censuses and other surveys and studies which have provided useful perspectives on internal migration in Kenya in general and migrants' urban-rural links in particular.

The national and sub-national planning scene in Kenya have been preoccupied with urban-rural imbalance which characterises the country's dual economy. This book provides exemplary lessons for researchers, planners and policy makers, indeed, a whole gamut of students of urban-rural interaction. This explains the intended wide and diverse readership of this book: university students and teachers in the various social sciences and humanities, civil servants, workers in non-governmental organisations and general readers of topical issues in development. The scenario painted in the book embraces not only the so-called "economy of affection" but also survival strategies in locales that are less attractive to investors than urban areas where all forms of development take place.

This book is a tribute to both the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) who readily funded the research on which it is primarily based and to Kenyans who consented to lengthy and at times thorny interviews on issues touching on their personal lives as well as investigating their active involvement in improving their rural communities. My special gratitude to my research colleague Professor M.S. Mukras who ensured the completion of fieldwork

while I was out of Kenya on study leave and for partially compiling the report to which both of us contributed despite the formidable distance; unfortunately his busy schedules precluded his collaboration in preparing this book. I am grateful to late Professor Simeon H. Ominde, E.B.S. former Director of Population Studies and Research Institute, University of Nairobi for his encouragement and support.

Thanks are also due to my long time friend and colleague, Dr. Elias H.O. Ayiemba, for making useful suggestions on the earlier drafts of this book. Finally, I thank Ms. Esther Abaka and Gloria S. Adomaa of Accra, Ghana for their keen and careful typing of the first draft of the manuscript, and Anthony Amedzakey of Ghana, Julia Oyuga and Agnes Andolo who typed it in the final form. Of course I thank my family who provided a congenial environment in which I wrote this book and therefore contributed to it. Any errors and omissions are the author's own responsibility.

John O. Oucho

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