

URBAN INVISIBLES: POVERTY AND INEQUALITY IN AFRICA'S RAPIDLY GROWING CITIES

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BIENVENUE CHEZ BARRY LINSAN

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Background
and
Justification

01

“The dire poverty of some is not an affliction which impacts only on those who are deprived. It reverberates across the globe and ineluctably impacts negatively on the whole of humanity, including those who live in conditions of comfort and plenty.” Nelson Mandela

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) promotes a transition towards the just city in Africa, guided by four main pillars: dignity,¹ equity and diversity,² rights and responsibilities,³ and democracy.⁴ Aiming to contribute to this knowledge base, this working paper will focus on residents who are key recipients of injustices with no means of escaping it, also known as the “*Urban Invisibles*.”

WHO ARE URBAN INVISIBLES?

The majority of urban residents in African cities live a life of shattered dreams as city designs and policies continue to favour the minority middle- and high-income groups. These “Urban Invisibles”, including the urban poor, children, youth, women, and persons with disabilities, remain unrepresented in city plans and programs, and are often only considered through tokenistic approaches. They also remain invisible in the mainstream media. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung defines them as “key recipients of injustice with no means of escaping it”.

Despite various provisions in new urban institutions for people’s participation, there remain many Urban Invisibles whose views are never heard, and who are shut out of decision-making spaces. They include:

- Demographic Invisibles (residents of informal settlements and informal sector workers who are ignored by service providers and policymakers);

- Digital Invisibles (netizens who are digitally connected but who are only visible to each other, not to policymakers);
- Mobility Invisibles (those, including children, pregnant women, and people living with disabilities, who find it difficult or impossible to use urban modes of public transport);
- Media Invisibles (those ignored by the mainstream media, which tends to focus on news that is sensational rather than news that highlights the many challenges facing the majority of urban poor residents).

Inclusion of Urban Invisibles in cities’ decision-making processes, and reflecting their needs in urban infrastructure and planning, would go a long way in engendering “just cities” in Africa.

Source: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Kenya Office, 2020

1 “This is the right of an individual or a group to be valued, respected, and treated ethically. It is to recognise the worthiness of a human individual or a group. It implies respect of the individual or a group regardless of their perceived socio-economic or political status” (FES, 2020, p.10)

2 “An equitable city is one where the city and its benefits are shared equitably among the citizens. A city of diversity is a city where there is an understanding that democratic processes may result in the exclusion of others (especially minorities) so measures are put in place to ensure justice for all, including minorities and visitors” (ibid.).

3 “A city where the rights of all citizens and visitors are observed. These rights are counter-balanced by citizens taking responsibility in the affairs of the city and in developing their city” (ibid.).

4 “A city where citizens make collective decisions based on informed majoritarianism, but in a manner that respects the dignity of all and that considers equity and diversity” (ibid.).

The focus on Urban Invisibles is especially critical because the number of people in poverty in Africa continues to grow despite the interventions in place. That is, while there was a reduction in the share of people living in poverty, the pace of this reduction relative to population growth has been too slow. Also, despite the reduction, there are 490 million people in poverty today compared to 284 million in 1990 (World Bank, 2020; Development Aid, 2021). In addition, it is estimated that 60% of the total urban population in African countries resides in slums or informal settlements (UNICEF, 2020).

The problem of poverty is further exacerbated by high urbanization rates. Currently, while Africa is the least urbanized region in the world, the rate at which the region is urbanizing is higher than other regions, at 3.99%, compared to the world, at 1.83%.⁵ With these high rates of urbanization, the African population is expected to double by 2050. Approximately 70% of this population will be living in urban areas. While urbanization has led to high economic growth in other regions, growth has not been adequate in the region to improve human well-being.⁶ The combination of high rates of urbanization, high informality, and low economic growth call for a more inclusive approach to development in the region.

An inclusive approach to development is critical in the context of high inequality rates seen in the region. These data about inequality need to be considered within a wider framework of intra-urban inequality as well as urban-rural inequality. While the data on poverty is amply visible to statisticians, its broader meaning can only be understood in relation to the distribution of income, assets, and opportunities within urban areas as a whole. It should be stressed that intra-urban inequality is not only a consequence of income-earning opportunities and how individuals make their way through urban labor markets, but also how national and local government policies themselves contribute

to different forms of inequality.⁷ For instance, fiscal policy, both on expenditures and the revenue, can significantly contribute to inequality.

While economic growth is vital for improving human well-being, policies that target the poor to reduce inequality and poverty can have a significant influence on well-being (Oranga, 2020). This is particularly important because the poor lack basic necessities such as access to water, food, health, and education facilities, and decent housing and sanitation, among others. Also, several countries show that urban premium⁸ is eroding. These gaps highlight the need to devise inclusive and just policies to ensure that urban services are inclusive and accessible, including to the Urban Invisibles. Thus, this working paper seeks to understand the trends and drivers of poverty and inequality. In addition, using access to basic education as a case study, the paper also seeks to understand if the provision of public goods is just and how it can be improved.

The working paper is structured as follows: Section Two offers the methodology, Section Three investigates the nexus between urbanization, economic growth, and inequality. More specifically, this section provides an overview of the relationship between urbanization and economic growth in Africa, with cases from Kenya and Senegal. The section also shows trends in poverty, inequality, and human development, and then discusses the manifestations and drivers of inequality. Lastly, the section reviews the effect of Covid-19 on the economy and population at large. Section Four investigates how just is the provision of education as a public good in Nairobi and Dakar and focuses on three key lenses: affordability, accessibility, and adequacy. Section Five discusses and summarizes the findings in light of the reviewed literature. Finally, Section Six provides key pathways to reducing inequalities and ensuring *Urban Invisibles* benefit from urbanization and the provision of public goods.

⁵ World Bank (2020). Annual Population Growth rate. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?locations=ZG-1W>

⁶ Brookings. (2020). Prerequisite to Getting Africa's Urbanization "Right." <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2020/01/21/prerequisites-to-getting-africas-urbanization-right/>

⁷ A study of the role of local public expenditures in Buenos Aires showed that 11.5% of the population received 68% of expenditure, see Michael Cohen and Dario Debowicz, "The Five Cities of Buenos Aires, (UNESCO, 2004)

⁸ "Urban premium encapsulated the idea that well-structured cities generate high level of economic and social outcomes," (Turok, 2016, p. 235).



Methodology

02

This paper used a mixed-method approach, where, first, existing literature was reviewed to understand the extent of poverty and inequality in Kenya and Senegal, with a focus on cities. In addition, data from World Bank's World Development Indicators and Human Development reports by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were used to conduct a descriptive analysis to complete the literature review. Lastly, interview guides were developed and administered to key informants. The guides focused on access to education as a case study within cities.

The main objective was to understand the extent to which education, as a public good, is accessible to the general population, focusing on Urban Invisibles, and how this access can be made just. The conceptualization of education as a just public good relies on a framework that uses three lenses: affordability (nonexcludable), physical accessibility (nonrival), and adequacy (good quality) of education to everyone, including the Urban Invisibles (see section 4.1 for more details of the just framework). Based on the findings and available literature, a discussion took place, which then informed the study's recommendations.



The conceptualization of education as a just public good relies on a framework that uses three lenses: affordability (nonexcludable), physical accessibility (nonrival), and adequacy (good quality) of education to everyone, including the Urban Invisibles

Urbanization,
Economic Growth,
and Inequality
Nexus

03

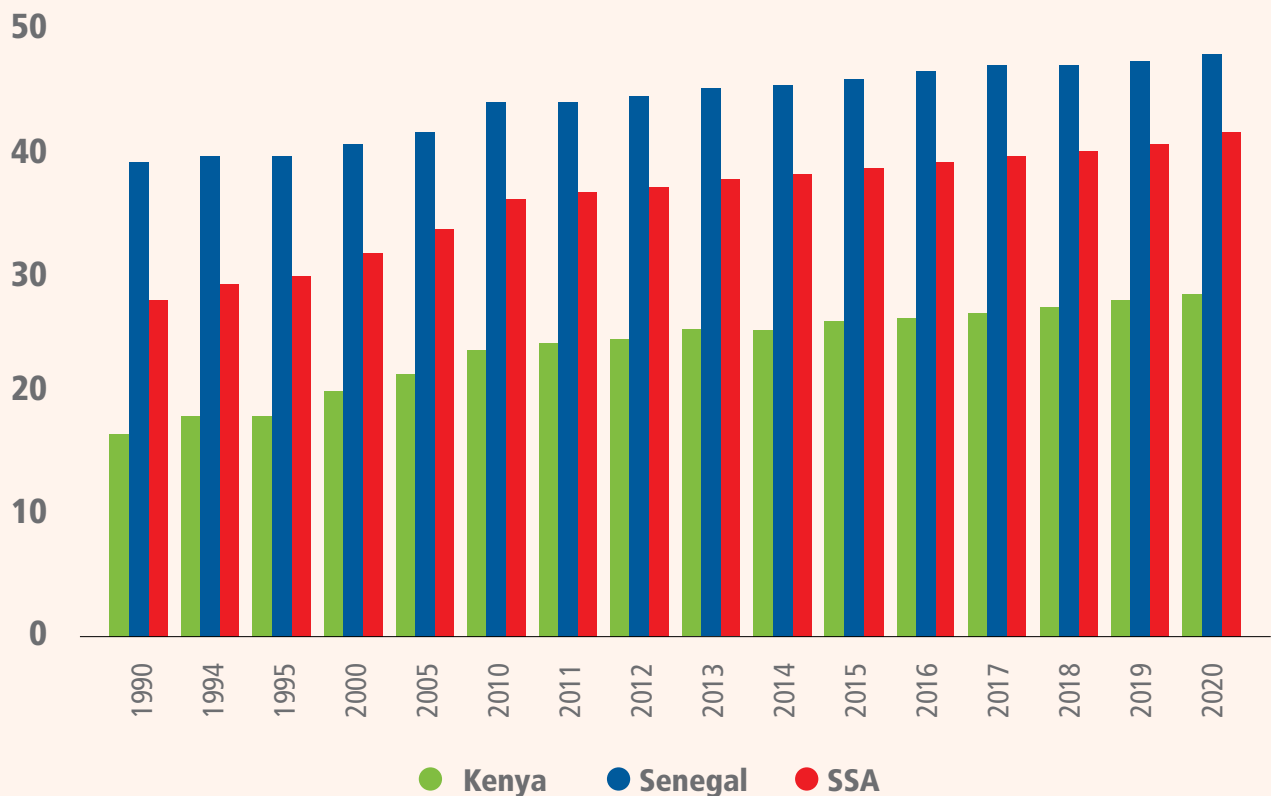
3.1 Urbanization and Economic Growth in SSA

African countries are experiencing high levels of urbanization, and while urbanization presents opportunities, it could be problematic if not well managed. On the one hand, urbanization can offer opportunities for economic development and, thus, reduce poverty and improve human development. On the other hand, it can cause high inequality and poverty, thus lowering human development.

Demographic approximations by the National Agency of Statistics and the World Bank

estimate that in 2020 the population of Senegal was 16.7 million,⁹ and almost half of this population lived in urban areas (48%). In Kenya, the total population is estimated at 47,564,296,¹⁰ and 28% of the country's population lives in urban areas (see Figure 1).¹¹ Despite the low level of urbanization in Kenya, studies show that the rate at which Kenya is urbanizing is at 4.01% annually, which is higher than the average for the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (approximately 3.99%) and Senegal (3.69%).

FIGURE 1:
Percent Urbanized: Kenya and Senegal
Source: World Development Indicators



9 World Bank. (2021). Population, Total, Senegal. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=SN>

10 KNBS. (2019). Kenya Population and Housing Census. Volume II: Distribution of Population by Administrative Units.

11 This percent is 31% according to Kenyan census report.

12 World Bank. (2021). Urban Population Growth (Annual %) World. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?locations=1W>

In 2020 the population of Senegal was **16.7 million**, and almost half of this population lived in urban areas (**48%**). In Kenya, the total population is estimated at approximately **47.6 Million**, and **28%** of the country's population lives in urban areas.



The urbanizing rates in Kenya and Senegal are well above the world rate of 1.82%, showing the need to ensure that the process is well managed to cater for the growing population. In Senegal, the capital city Dakar, with a population of 3.9 million, hosts approximately 25% of the total population, despite occupying only 0.3% of the land.¹³ This suggests that Dakar alone hosts almost half of the total urbanized population in the country. In Kenya, however, despite Nairobi only hosting 9.2% of the total population, or approximately 4.4 million people, the country is urbanizing at a higher rate than SSA. In fact, literature shows that in Nairobi, 60% of the population lives in informal settlements, which occupy only 10% of the total land in the city (FES, 2020). This shows the urgency in addressing the urbanization process to ensure it is well-managed.



Dakar hosts half of the urbanized population, despite occupying **0.3%** of the land.

It has been argued that countries that have high economic growth have experienced high levels of urbanization and that cities drive economic development. That is, on the one hand, development encourages urbanization as people move from rural to urban areas for various opportunities, including employment, health, and education.¹⁴ On the other hand, urbanization causes economic growth due to “economies of scale in infrastructure, capital, labor, and managerial resources” (Liddle, 2017, p.5). However, this argument has been contested because recent research has shown that not all countries experience economic growth during high levels of urbanization (Turok & McGranahan, 2013, Jedwab & Vollrath, 2015). In fact, while many economists agree that urbanization and economic growth are closely related, they caution that rapid population growth does not necessarily imply accelerated economic growth and that urbanization and industrialization do not necessarily occur concurrently (Ibid.).



Nairobi hosts **9.2%** of the total population of Kenya, but **60%** of its residents live in informal settlements, which occupy only **10%** of the city's land.

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa seem to be experiencing rapid urbanization without subsequent economic growth, thus contributing to an economic and social crisis that plagues the continent. This crisis is worsened by poor governance in several African countries, which hinders inclusive economic growth and further disenfranchises the poor, including the *Urban Invisibles* (Mbaku, 2021). Kenya, for instance, is yet to leverage the urbanization process to transform its economy.¹⁵

13 World Bank. (2021). The World Bank in Senegal: Overview. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/senegal/overview#1>

14 A survey by the FES in Kenya showed that 54% of the residents who move to urban areas, do so for better opportunities. FES (2022). Towards the Just City in Kenya. Just City Series -Kenya Survey. Manuscript in preparation.

15 World Bank. (2016). Republic of Kenya: Kenya Urbanization Review. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/639231468043512906/pdf/AUS8099-WP-P148360-PUBLIC-KE-Urbanization-ACS.pdf>

And while Kenya has been experiencing economic growth, it has seen very little structural transformation, where the urban economy is concentrated in the informal sector, estimated to constitute approximately 84% of total employment (KNBS, 2019). A similar situation is seen in Senegal, where the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020) estimates that 97% of the businesses are concentrated in the informal sector. Unfortunately, these high shares of informal employment suggest that both countries do not experience high economic growth—studies have shown that the informal and services sectors usually experience lower productivity compared to the formal manufacturing industry, hence hindering adequate economic growth (Rodrik, 2016). As such, such sectors are not associated with lower rates of poverty and inequality (Dodman et al., 2017).

A large proportion of goods and services in African cities are non-tradable, as opposed to manufacturing. For instance, approximately more than 40% of goods in both Nairobi and Dakar are non-tradable, which indicates a lack of functioning markets that close both cities, and the countries at large, to global economies (Lall, et al. 2017). This is especially problematic because the economic advantages of cities emanate from economies of scale, which functions within firms and between firms (the agglomeration of economies). This agglomeration of economies has various benefits, typically characterized as the clustering of different sectors of economic activities (urbanization of economies) and clustering of the same sector of economic activities (localization of economies) (UNECA, 2017).

For advantages of agglomeration to occur optimally, cities have to create an enabling environment that allows companies to communicate clearly and effortlessly, that strives to diversify the economy and attract foreign investment, that supports industrialization and regional integration, and above all, that provides adequate public infrastructure to enable firms to function efficiently (Collier, 2016, UNECA, 2017). Urban form, thus, plays a critical role in promoting economic growth and people's well-being. More specifically, it is advisable that cities are well-designed to be connected and compact in a way that supports a variety of uses and is well integrated with public transport (OECD, 2007).

In addition, good and inclusive governance will play an important role in accelerating cities' economic growth and social development. Many African countries do not have functional reforms that tackle corruption and political elitism. In turn, this leads to the misappropriation of public resources that are critical to service delivery, such as access to education, health, and other basic needs.¹⁶ In fact, "elites are usually not incentivized to implement pro-poor economic programs that enhance the ability of the poor to participate productively and gainfully in economic growth."¹⁷ Yet, studies show that good governance is essential to effective policies that manage social and economic resources, leading to inclusive growth (Anas, 2017). As such, it is critical that cities, and countries at large, strive to enhance good governance and design and implement policies that encourage peace and economic growth while addressing inequality and poverty and ensuring the participation of all citizens, including the *Urban Invisibles*.



40% of goods in both Dakar and Nairobi are non-tradable, and both cities have high shares of informal and services sectors, hence do not experience adequate growth to reduce poverty and inequality.

¹⁶ A survey by FES showed that residents believe that access to public services is tied to who is in power. This suggests that service delivery will be negatively impacted if a country is characterized by high elitism and corruption, showing the importance of inclusive governance for efficiency in service delivery. FES (2022). Towards the Just City in Kenya. Just City Series -Kenya Survey. Manuscript in preparation.

¹⁷ Mbaku, J. (2021). Pp26. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/ForesightAfrica2020_Chapter2_20200110.pdf

Thus, as efforts are made to support economic growth, it is vital that the growth and its accompanying development are inclusive, where they benefit the *Urban Invisibles*. The lack of inclusive growth would further widen the inequality gaps, leading to high poverty rates. Inclusive growth and development are vital as countries experience high urbanization rates to ensure that all benefit from this process. As such, as countries focus on economic growth, they should also implement distributional policies that focus on the poor to improve their circumstances (Oranga, 2020).

3.2 Poverty, Inequality, and Human Development

3.2.1 POVERTY AND INEQUALITY TRENDS

Poverty rates in all its forms are high in both countries, at approximately 53% of the population who are multi-dimensionally poor.¹⁸ Compared to monetary measures, studies show that one in three people experience monetary poverty in both countries—in Kenya, the overall poverty rate translates to 36%, and in Senegal to 37.8% of the total population.^{19,20} The multi-dimensional measure reveals that 16% more people are in poverty than the monetary poverty measure. This suggests that the money metric measure does not capture the full intensity of poverty, which is more than just income. Poverty in all its forms affects all aspects of life, including education, health, shelter, among other basic needs, which would further exacerbate the quality of life.

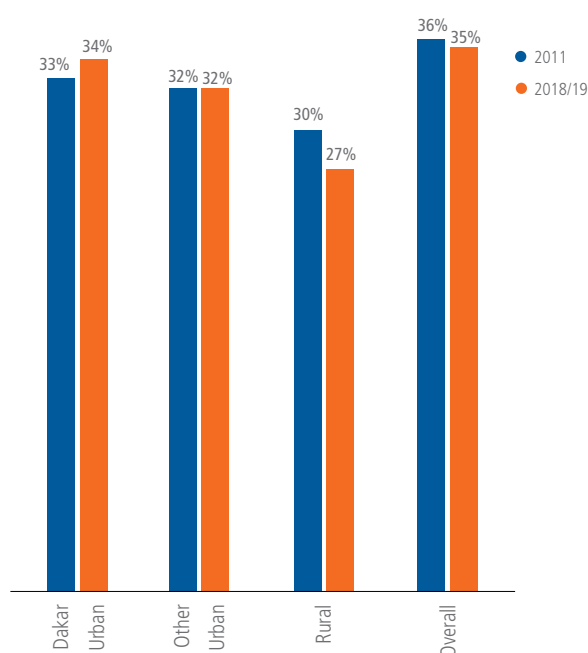
These high rates of poverty have further been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the World Bank, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the poverty reduction process in Kenya, leading to an additional two million people falling into poverty as jobs and incomes were impacted by the lockdowns (World Bank, 2020b). In Senegal, it is anticipated that the pandemic is likely to lead to up to a loss of 12.6% of monthly GDP

to households, thus, increasing the poverty rate to 72.3% in the worst-case scenario (Seck, 2020). This raises the question of whether these countries have the capacity to ensure that the poor and the most vulnerable, including the *Urban Invisibles*, are protected from the negative effects of the shocks. Devising policies or initiatives to protect the vulnerable will be critical to the well-being and development of the countries as urbanization occurs.

Regional analysis shows that poverty rates are lower in urban areas than in rural areas, suggesting a rural-urban divide. In Kenya, poverty incidence appears higher in rural areas (40.1%) than in urban areas (29.1%) (KNBS, 2020). Similarly, in Senegal, this rate is lower in cities, at 19.8%, compared to rural areas at 53.6% (ANSD, 2021). The significance of these findings suggests that even if conditions may not be good in urban areas, they are better than in rural areas. Thus, even in such contexts of high urbanization levels, “urban growth is a channel that lets people vote with their feet to improve their conditions (Oranga, 2020).”

FIGURE 2:
Inequality Trends in Senegal



¹⁸ According to the comprehensive report on Poverty, this rate is at 53% in Kenya, while according to HDR report, this rate is at 53.2% in Senegal. See Senegal: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/SEN.pdf>

¹⁹ KNBS. (2020). Kenya Comprehensive Poverty Analysis: Children, Youth, and Women in Focus.

²⁰ ANSD. (2021). Enquête harmonisée sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages (EHCVM) au Sénégal. Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie.

In addition, available data shows higher poverty rates in secondary cities compared to major cities. The inter-urban analysis also shows similarities in both countries where, in Senegal's urban landscape, the poverty rate is currently lower in Dakar (8.7%), compared to other urban areas, at 29.9% (ANDS, 2021). Similarly, in Nairobi and Mombasa, this rate was lower, at 14% in the pre-pandemic period, compared to 31.6% in other urban areas, and at 38.6% during the pandemic in Nairobi and Mombasa compared to 49.9% in other areas (Nafula et al., 2020). This suggests inter-urban inequality where poverty reduction efforts are focused in major cities at the detriment of smaller cities.

Overall, these high rates of poverty in Kenya and Senegal are also exacerbated by high inequality rates. Studies show that while growth can play a role in reducing poverty, high inequality might limit the extent to which poverty would reduce (UNDP, 2017, Bourguignon, 2003, Datt et al., 2016). Overall, in Senegal between 2011 and 2018-19, inequality measured by Gini has decreased by 0.5 % points, at approximately 35% currently (see Figure 2).²¹ Similarly, Kenya has witnessed a decline, where inequality measured by Gini decreased from 0.47 in 2005/6 to 0.404 in 2015/16, and inequality measured by the Palma ratio also declined from 2.9 in 2005/6 to 2.0 in 2015/2016 (KNBS, 2020).²²

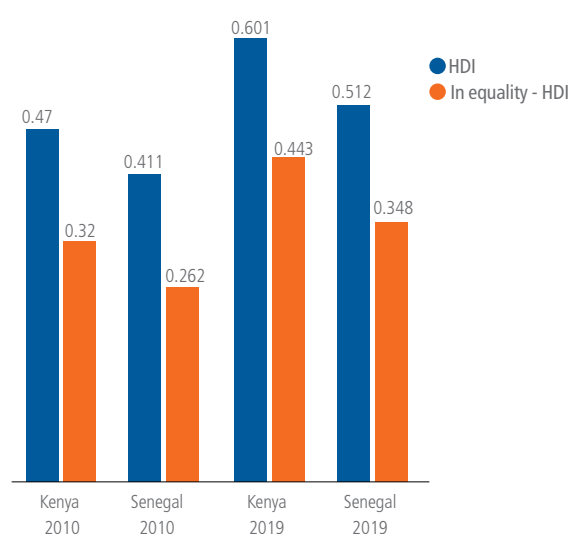
Despite both countries witnessing a decline in inequality overall, inequality rates remain higher in urban areas than in rural areas. In fact, regionally, Gini increased in Dakar by 1.5 percentage points, at 34% currently, while inequality reduced in other regions. In Kenya, while the decline was more pronounced in urban areas (in 2015/6, Gini was at 0.363 from 0.447 in 2005/06) than rural areas (0.38 in 2005 to 0.347 in 2015/6), the figures remain higher in urban areas, suggesting that moderate growth experienced in the country only benefits a few individuals, and while there is a lot of drive towards high growth, there are no concrete measures on how to address inequality.²³ To

address high inequality, it is imperative that growth is inclusive and that there is equality of opportunity that would increase access for the most vulnerable, thus creating an avenue for poverty reduction and human well-being.

3.2.2 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Human development as an aspect of overall well-being is critical because it puts people's needs first, as opposed to economic growth. While this perspective also acknowledges that economic growth is vital, it does so through the lens of human capabilities. That is, "what people are able to do and be" – what might be called people's real freedoms. In this view, a healthy economy is one which enables people to enjoy a long healthy life, a good education, a decent job, family life, [and] democratic debate, [amongst others]" (Alkire & Deneulin, 2009, p.1). By using the human capability lens, human development focuses on improving human life by looking at the different aspects that affect the quality of life, beyond income, thereby creating an environment where people can live fulfilling lives (Anand & Sen, 1997; Alkire & Deneulin, 2009).

FIGURE 3:
Human Development Index Trends



21 ANSD. (2021).

22 KNBS. (2020). Inequality Trends and Diagnostics in Kenya 2020.

23 Ibid.

While acknowledging that economic growth is vital for development, it is critical to focus on human development to ensure that the disenfranchised, such as the Urban Invisibles, have access to opportunities. Observing human development trends via the Human Development Index (HDI),²⁴ the reports show that currently, Senegal is ranked at 168th out of 189 countries, with a score of 0.512, while Kenya is ranked 143rd with a score of 0.601.²⁵ In addition, analysis by gender shows that females are performing much worse than males in both countries—in Senegal, the males' HDI was 0.546 compared to 0.475 for females, and in Kenya, males' HDI was 0.62 compared to 0.581 for females. Although both countries have improved across the years, as shown in Figure 3 below, the rankings are still poor, especially for Senegal, which is classified as a low human development country, compared to Kenya (classified under medium development).

When the HDI is adjusted for inequality, both countries witness a decrease in the HDI rating, suggesting that the poor are further marginalized from a multidimensional angle. In 2019, Kenya lost 26.3 percentage points, while Senegal lost 32 percentage points. This loss suggests that when poverty and development are observed from a multidimensional angle, it is evident that the most in need, including the Urban Invisibles, are further disenfranchised, and this is a key component of development that is missed when most analyses are based on economic growth. Inequality and poverty, thus, need to be addressed within a broader framework of not only income but also access to opportunities and services that would contribute to the general well-being of everyone. As such, policies should focus on not only inclusive economic growth but also key priorities for inclusive development as there are various drivers of inequality beyond income.

3.3 Drivers and Manifestations of Poverty and Inequality in Dakar and Nairobi

Economic growth that is accompanied by high inequality results in lower growth-poverty elasticity.²⁶ Meaning, if economic growth is unequal, thereby producing high income inequality, its effect on poverty reduction will be lower. Also, it takes longer to reduce income inequality during growth than it takes to reduce poverty within the same circumstances (Bhorat, 2015).²⁷ Inequality is worse in African countries because many people already live in poverty, and these high rates of inequality are driven by various factors. The section below discusses some of the drivers and manifestations of inequality in African cities.

Structural factors that have been in existence since colonialism play a significant role in exacerbating inequality. Colonialism in Africa was characterized by marginalization and exploitation of the majority African population. Land alienation played a significant part in creating apartheid-like conditions, which were even reflected in how cities were designed, with segregated spaces for different races (FES, 2020). Such factors “capture historical processes that defined political and economic relations, determined ownership of productive assets, and shaped institutions for decades” (Shimeles & Nabassaga, 2017, p. 9). For instance, the dualistic nature of the African economy, which has persisted from colonial times until today, affects inequality rates. This dual economy is characterized by one economy that produces the majority of the country's wealth and is linked to the global economy, and the other, which employs the majority of the population, but has lower productivity, is disconnected from the global economy, and does not contribute as much to the country's economic growth (Bojabotseha, 2011).

24 “The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living.” <https://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>

25 The rankings are published in UNDP. (2020). Human Development Reports. <https://hdr.undp.org/en/content/latest-human-development-index-ranking>

26 Growth-poverty elasticity is defined as “sensitivity of poverty reduction to a rise in economic growth” (Bhorat, 2015).

27 Bhorat, H. (2015). Inequality in Africa: Implications for Sustainable Development Goals. More information can be found at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2015/09/22/inequality-in-africa-implications-for-the-sustainable-development-goals/>

For instance, over the years, a significant proportion of labour has moved out of rural agriculture into low paying informal sectors in urban areas. Even though agriculture accounts for about 34% of the country's GDP (KNBS, 2019), there is a noticeable shift of low-skilled rural labour to the urban informal sector. This has led to high inequality and poverty rates due to the wage gaps between informal and formal workers—"workers with similar skills tend to earn less in the informal sector than their formal sector peers."²⁸

The informal sector accounts for the majority of the economy in Nairobi and Dakar, but unfortunately, the sector does not provide enough resources to improve the lifestyles of its dependents.

In Dakar, the share of informal employment is 80%, while in Kenyan cities, over three out of four urban jobs are informal, and overall, the share of informal employment is 84% countrywide (Page, et. al., 2020, Timmis, 2018, KNBS, 2019). And while the majority of employment in these cities is in the informal sector, the productivity of the sector is very low compared to manufacturing. In addition, the earnings from the informal sector are very low, especially for those operating smaller businesses, whose incomes tend to be below the minimum wage (FKE, 2021). The working conditions of informal workers are also poor, characterized by a lack of basic services such as sanitation (Page, et. al.2020). At the same time, workers lack social protection coverage compared to their peers in the formal sector, reflecting higher levels of vulnerability (Abizaid, 2019). This indicates that Dakar and Nairobi have large numbers of vulnerable groups which the cities do not cater for.

The employment landscape in Dakar and Nairobi perpetuates inequality, where although the informal sector employs the majority of the population, this population remains most vulnerable.

Housing segregation and intra-urban discrimination also perpetuate higher levels of inequality and poverty in Dakar and Nairobi.

For instance, housing segregation – where the rich and poor inhabit different parts of the city, with the rich having better and more access to services – affects poor households and individuals negatively. According to the OECD report on “Divided Cities,” this type of segregation based on income may lead to intergenerational poverty because of the social distance between the wealthy and the poor. Such distance is reflected through housing prices, making it hard for the poor to live in better neighborhoods. On the individual level, poor neighbourhoods can lead to “negatives effects on educational and work outcomes” (Moreno-Monroy & Veneri, 2018, p.13, Cohen & Debowicz, 2004). Studies show that “children growing up in poverty areas will experience negative neighborhood effects on their income and employment opportunities, limiting their option as adults.” This is partly because such neighborhoods lack access to good quality schools that put the poor at a disadvantage as adults (OECD, 2018, p.143).

Intra-urban discrimination is present in the urban landscape of both countries.

An example of intra-urban discrimination occurs when informal settlements located within cities have little to no access to healthcare, education, sanitation, and other services—partly due to a lack of adequate financial resources and policies to facilitate change, among other factors—while wealthy neighborhoods have access to most facilities. The Kibera slum in Nairobi is one such settlement, where despite its central location within the Nairobi city, its residents still lack some of the very basic services such as water and sanitation. In Senegal, key informants stated that the government has failed to address the challenges of low-income neighborhoods. As in Nairobi, such neighborhoods lack adequate living facilities and access to basic services.

28 Deléchat, C & Medina, M. (2020). What is the Informal Economy? IMF. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/12/what-is-the-informal-economy-basics.htm>

Housing segregation in Nairobi

Source: *Unequal Scenes*



Nairobi and Dakar are also primate cities that contribute to high levels of inequality and poverty.

Primacy is a situation where one city is much larger than the other cities in the country, and dominates in terms of its impact on the economy, owing to agglomeration of economies, which, in turn, leads to a higher population in the dominating city. For instance, Dakar hosts half of the urbanized population of Senegal, and yet it occupies only 0.3% of the land. Also, Key informants stated that Dakar concentrates most of the commercial sector, public universities, and healthcare facilities, which forces people to go to Dakar to seek these services and/or look for opportunities. Similarly, although Nairobi hosts about 33%²⁹ of the urban population in Kenya, it is also a city with the highest population density in Kenya, at 6,247 per square kilometer (KNBS, 2019). According to a publication by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2020), the city will likely remain the most important urban center for decades, despite a devolved system of governance in Kenya that was established in 2013. Unfortunately, high primacy can lead to regional imbalances and urban inequality, especially in the presence of political corruption and instability, which would privilege certain people (Kim, 2009).

Thus, the quality of urbanization will play a critical role in reducing inequality and poverty in both cities by ensuring that *Urban Invisibles* are seen. If urbanization is well managed, it can lead to numerous benefits, such as shorter commute times due to better transport facilities; better provision of public services (e.g., water and sanitation)

Quality of urbanization in cities will play a significant role in ensuring cities are just.

that are affordable to the majority of the population; and improved lifestyle of the residents due to easier access to better quality food, housing, healthcare, and education (Wan, 2012). The provision of infrastructure is particularly important because it affects different aspects of a well-functioning city. In addition, infrastructure can be beneficial to people as it can promote inclusive growth, lower inequality rates, and alleviate poverty. Such benefits occur by generating more jobs, connecting markets, and lowering production and transportation costs, among others (AfDB, 2018).

Sustainable urbanization must, thus, account for infrastructure that is developed within a broader comprehensive network accompanied by effective service delivery targeting those who need it the most, especially the *Urban Invisibles*.

In other words, sustainable infrastructure development requires “an understanding of how communities and societies evolve and the role of people and citizens within them.”³⁰ In turn, this will ensure that citizens have a voice and actively participate in exercising their rights in the planning process, resulting in investments that are of greater quality, affordable, and accessible to all. In turn, this will result in inclusive growth, lower inequality rates, and poverty reduction. Above all, political will is critical to reducing inequality, as studies have shown that “where there is political will to pursue progressive reforms, countries are able to reverse even stubborn inequality trends and build more equal societies.”³¹

Sustainable infrastructure development requires “an understanding of how communities and societies evolve and the role of people and citizens within them.”

29 According to the 2019 Census, Nairobi's population was estimated at approximately 4.4 million, while the total urban population estimated at 14.7 million. KNBS (2019)

30 Saghir, J. (2017). Pp.4

31 Oxfam. (2019). Pp.13



EFFECTS OF COVID-19

Both countries were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially their cities.

Both Kenya and Senegal had witnessed robust economic growth before the pandemic. For instance, in Kenya, the economic growth expanded by 6.5% in 2018 and 5.8 % in 2019 and was projected to continue growing (KNBS, 2020c).³² Similarly, Senegal witnessed more than 6% growth between 2014 and 2018, and in 2019, the economic growth was at 5.3% (BMZ, 2021). However, with the restriction of movements, especially in Dakar and Thies' regions (Senegal) and Nairobi and Mombasa (Kenya), there was a significant drop in economic growth (Onsomu, 2021). For instance, Dakar dropped from roughly 6% annually in the last five years to 1.3% in 2020, and Kenya's economy contracted to 1.1% in the third quarter of 2020 (BMZ, 2021, KNBS, 2020c). In general, urban areas were the worst hit, as the government restricted movements which negatively affected the population as many people lost their jobs.

The pandemic has had a severe socio-economic impact on the poor, further exacerbating inequalities. In Kenya, the rate of inequality in Nairobi and Mombasa before the pandemic increased from 0.33 pre-crisis to 0.49 after the pandemic, indicating that the poor, including the Urban Invisibles, were further disenfranchised (Nafula, 2020). Further, it is estimated that 50% of the households in Nairobi and Mombasa lost their income (Ibid.). Both countries show that those in informal employment were impacted the most because the informal sector offers low wages with no social security; subsequently, this increases inequality as informal workers have no means to cater to their day-to-day needs (FKE, 2021; Balde et al, 2020). In addition, closure of various places, including markets, led to shortages of goods and affected nutrition, where the number of meals households took reduced (UNDP, 2020; World Bank 2021). Additional challenges included lack of access to healthcare facilities—3 in 10 households reported less access to healthcare than before March 2020

(World Bank, 2020) as well as educational facilities (further discussed in section 4).

To curb the effect of Covid-19, both the government of Senegal and Kenya implemented measures, such as financial stimulus and tax breaks to cushion businesses.

While these measures have been instrumental, they only focused on the formal sector, leaving behind the informal sector, which accounts for a higher share of employment in Dakar and Nairobi and the country as a whole (Balde et al, 2020; FKE, 2021). In Kenya, it is estimated that approximately 83% of the informal sector workers did not receive the financial stimulus, and yet the highest share (about 59%) of them lost their livelihoods (FKE, 2021). Similarly, in Senegal, the informal sector, despite comprising a higher share of workers, also did not benefit from the stimulus, and yet 42% of these workers lost their jobs, compared to only 8% in the formal sector (Balde et al. 2020).

Therefore, while these measures had good intentions, they further exacerbated inequalities. These policies did not benefit the most vulnerable who needed them the most. In turn, this exacerbated poverty and inequality in these countries, particularly in cities. Such policies and their implementation are not just, because they are not accessible to those who are most in need. Thus, it is vital that the cities and countries, in general, ensure that the poor are better targeted in order to reduce inequality and that the *Urban Invisibles* have similar opportunities as everyone else. Only by doing so will there be an avenue to ensuring that cities are just.

Targeted policies addressing the needs of the most vulnerable are critical to curbing inequalities and ensuring that cities are just.

³² KNBS (2020). Quarterly Gross Domestic Product Report. Third Quarter, 2020. <https://www.knbs.or.ke/?wpdmpo=quarterly-gross-domestic-product-report-third-quarter-2020>



Case Study: Access
to Basic Education
as a Public Good

04

4.1 Conceptual Framework

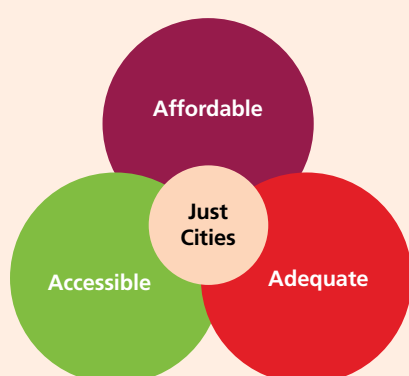
A good is considered public is if it meets two main conditions

- 1) It is nonexcludable and
- 2) Nonrivalrous.³³

Education can be termed a public good as it meets both conditions, where a community can use the good without directly paying for it, such as the case where citizens pay taxes, which serves to fund the good and thus, it can be enjoyed by everyone (nonexcludable), and when one person consumes the good, it does not diminish the ability of another person to consume it (nonrival).

Both Kenya and Senegal have laws and policies in place that theoretically place basic education as a public good, where everyone has a right to compulsory free basic education, making the good nonrival and nonexcludable. However, in practice, access to education is not free. With this consideration of the local context and using the official definition of a public good, this section investigates access to education using three lenses: is the access to education affordable (nonexcludable), physically accessible (nonrival), and adequate (good quality) to everyone, including the Urban Invisibles. This third lens of adequacy (quality) is critical because the fulfillment of the other two conditions (nonrival and nonexcludable) does not imply that the quality of education as a public good is acceptable and truly beneficial to everyone. More specifically, Figure 4 below shows the conceptual framework to be used for the analysis of education as a public good.³⁴

FIGURE 4:
The Three A Inclusive Framework



Access to education as a case study is being studied within the *three A's inclusive framework*,³⁵ which includes **Accessibility, Affordability, and Adequacy (quality)**. Within this framework, public goods that are physically accessible, affordable, and adequate in terms of good quality are termed as Just. The relationship between the 3A's can be visualized upside down, where only a few urban citizens can experience all the three A attributes, while most urban residents cannot experience all the three As. In most cases, urban residents can physically access these services, but the services are neither affordable nor of acceptable quality, and this is termed as being unjust.

This "three A inclusive" framework will be used as a basis for the analysis of education as a public good, with a focus on the Urban Invisibles, who are defined as "key recipients of injustice with no means of escaping from it" (FES, 2020). If the provision of education does not meet these conditions on the merit of the three lenses, then its provision is not Just. For instance, the private sector would be one such avenue that excludes Urban Invisibles, as such a good is usually not affordable nor physically accessible to all citizens.



³³ Paul A. Samuelson, "The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure," *Review of Economics and Statistics* 36, no. 4 (1954): 387–89.

³⁴ This paper does not analyze the different curriculums offered by the schools. Instead, it analyzes the provision of basic education in terms of the three pillars of just city highlighted above.

³⁵ This framework was developed by Aroyyo-Aroyyo, F (2021). *Connecting the Dots: People, Jobs, and Social Services*. The World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/35719/9781464816765.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

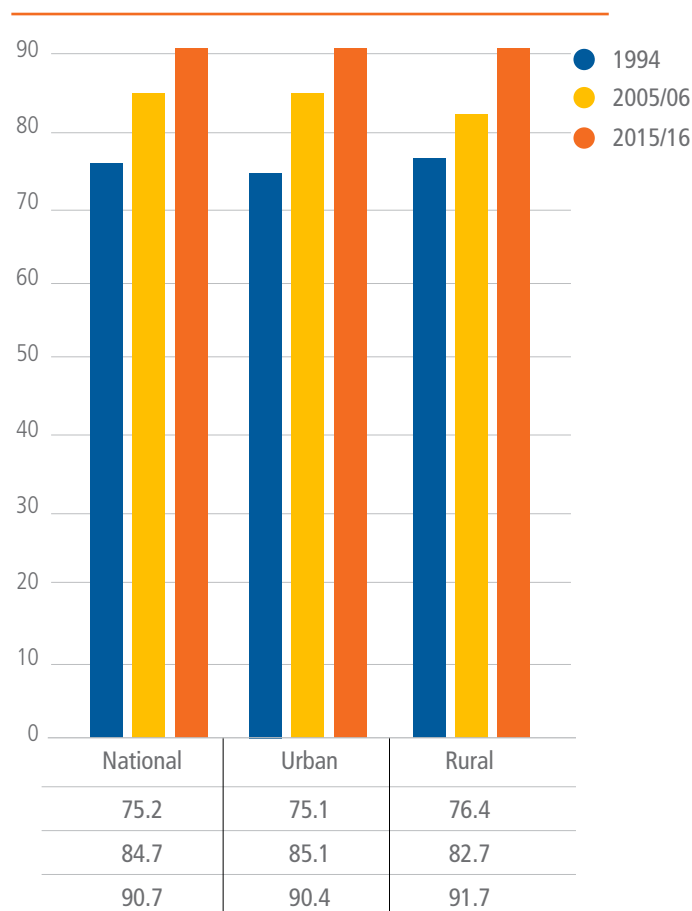
4.2 Findings

Access to education is key to reducing poverty and inequality and improving human development. Studies have shown that access to education can lead to higher productivity, which, in turn, increases social mobility, promotes healthy lives, and gives people more choices, which in turn improves their well-being (World Bank, 2018). Both Kenya and Senegal recognize this fact and have policies and legislations in place to offer free basic education. In Kenya, for instance, the "free primary education program" was introduced in 2003 to boost literacy levels and encourage high enrollment; this was followed by the incorporation of free secondary education in 2008. Also, article 43 (f) of the Kenyan constitution states that "every person has a right to education," and Article 53 states that "every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education." In addition, the Basic Education Act of 2013 also provides a legal framework for operationalizing the law to ensure every Kenyan can access basic education (Mulinya & Orodho (2015)).³⁶ Similarly, Senegal has constituted a law on education (Article 3 of Law N° 2004-37 (43), which allows all children up to 16 years of age to attend school free of charge.³⁷

The introduction of these laws has been instrumental in increasing enrolment rates in schools. As of 2015, Senegal witnessed an 18% increase in gross enrolment from 2000 at 69.3% to 2015 at approximately 85%, and Kenya witnessed an increase of 10% within the same time period.³⁸ Regionally, in Kenya, the attendance is highest in rural areas at 91.7% compared to urban areas at 90.4%, while in 2005, the rate was highest in urban areas (Figure 5). Unfortunately, nonattendance is higher among the poor, with an attendance rate of 87.2% compared to non-poor at 93.4% in 2015/16 (KNBS, 2020).

FIGURE 5:

Proportion of individuals attending school at national and regional levels (ages 6-18), Kenya
Source: *Inequality trends and diagnostic in Kenya (2020)*



In Senegal, the enrolment rates have been highest in urban areas compared to rural areas, but these rates are not optimal. Despite education being compulsory, the net attendance rate in primary school stands at 53% overall. Attendance is higher in urban areas, at approximately 70%, compared to rural areas, at 42%. In secondary school, this rate is even lower, at approximately 32% overall, where urban areas account for 43.4% and rural areas for 22% (ANSD, 2021).

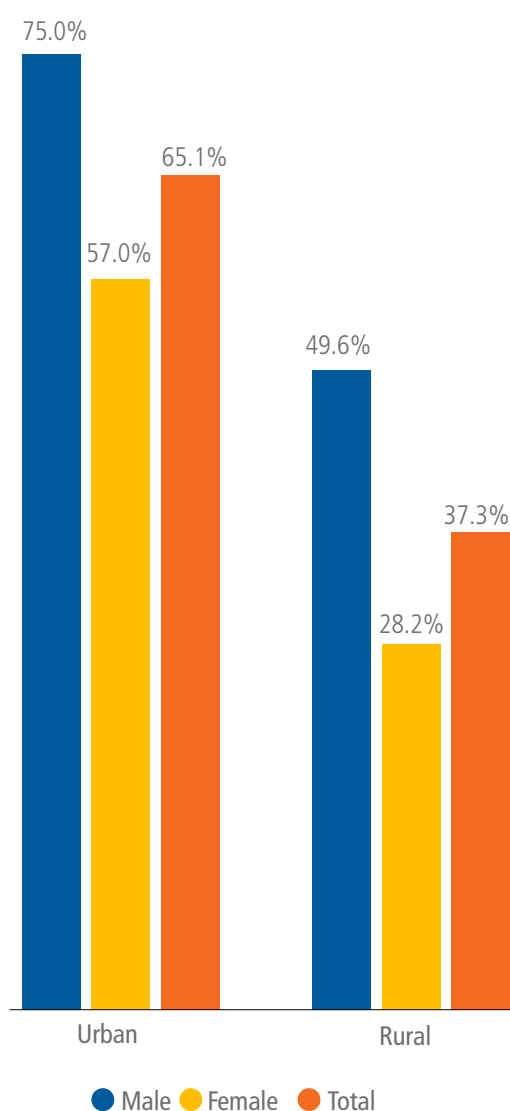
³⁶ This paper does not analyze the different curriculums offered by the schools. Instead, it analyzes the provision of basic education in terms of the three pillars of just city highlighted above.

³⁷ US Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs. (2014).

³⁸ Data is from the World Bank Indicators. Kenya was at 93% in 2000 compared to 103.7% in 2015.

In addition, the census data shows that the literacy rate is at 51.8% for the country. Literacy rates are higher in urban areas, at 65.1%, compared to 37.3% in rural areas (Figure 6). Also, males have a higher literacy rate both in urban and rural areas, with males at 75% in urban areas compared to females at 57%. Even among urban areas, regional differences exist, with the capital Dakar having the highest literacy rate of 72.3%, compared to other urban regions (Ibid.).

FIGURE 6
Literacy rates in Senegal



4.2.1 AFFORDABILITY

While these laws and regulations have been commendable in increasing enrolment rates in cities, their operationalization has been impacted by challenges. Interviews with key informants, as well as review of existing literature, suggest that even though education is termed as free, in practice, it is not affordable, especially to the poor in Nairobi and Dakar, where fees are set up by schools, thus increasing costs. These fees are not always regulated by the government as such, and tend to be hefty for low-income earners. This notion is corroborated by the census reports in both countries. In Kenya, lack of finances was the most common reason for dropouts, followed by illness and lack of interest (KNBS, 2020b), while in Senegal, lack of interest and financial reasons were also the leading reason for dropouts in primary schools, while for secondary school, the main reason was failing exams, and work, followed by a lack of interest.

These laws have also led to the proliferation of private schools, especially in Kenyan urban slums, further exacerbating inequalities. Since the introduction of Free Primary Education, public schools have been struggling to keep up with the demand—for example, there are only four public primary schools in the Kibera informal settlement in Nairobi, despite the high population in the area³⁹—and as a result, low-cost private schools have mushroomed (Malenya, 2020).

“Even though education is termed as free, in practice, it is not affordable, especially to the poor in Nairobi and Dakar.”

³⁹ There is a total of 147 primary schools in Kibera, out of which only four are public, translating to 63 students per teacher. http://openschoolskenya.org/static/blog-images/kibera_schools_a1_final.pdf

The schools promise to offer better facilities, where the public schools have fallen short. In turn, this has led to approximately 60% of the urban slum children attending these schools with the hope for a better future.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, this proliferation by the private sector is unplanned and not well-regulated as most are not registered with the government. The lack of registration of these schools suggests that their operations are closed out, and they do not receive funding from the Free Primary Education policy. In fact, studies have shown that these pro-poor-low-cost schools charge approximately double the fee charged by so-called free primary schools (Malenya, 2020).

The proliferation of private schools has further exacerbated urban inequalities.

While private schools in Kenya were meant to release more resources for public schools, such schools tend to be very expensive and exclude the poor. In addition, the low-cost private schools in the urban informal settlements are further creating more inequalities even within these settlements. First, the fees posed by these schools are relatively high, and the parents have to struggle to pay the fees, denying them and their children the basic necessities such as good nutrition, which is key to the development of a child. In addition, the fact that most of these schools are not registered means that the schools cannot benefit from the funding of the Free Primary Education policy. As such, the children who are sent to these schools are excluded from receiving these funds, and yet these children are the most in need. In this case, Free Primary Education as a policy is failing to meet its promises to the poor. For instance, a key informant stated that investment for education is always for the elite, as education has been privatized.

“Education...there is the public system. Most students today are in private schools in Dakar. Public schools used to be the best... There’s been the privatization of education...Public policies are still linked to colonialism. The system is unequal. All the investment is for the elite. All Senegalese who have enough resources go to private schools” (Key informant, Dakar).

Parents’ inability to pay school fees usually leads to missed classes and further discrimination within the classes for the urban poor.

In addition to lack of fees, if parents are unable to buy school uniforms in Nairobi’s informal settlements, their children are usually asked to sit at the back of the class, which could host 100 students, or sometimes sent home to get the fees and uniform. In fact, an analysis of the Kenyan education sector in urban areas shows that the sector has been plagued by many challenges, including the lack of adequate resources, which make school impose levies on parents to cushion themselves. The result is that learners are sent home until they are able to pay the required fees and levies (usually for extracurricular activities or maintenance of school infrastructure) and, as such, have no recourse as the government does not impose any penalties on schools that do so. In turn, this means that the poor suffer the most. Discussions with a key informant who has deeper insights into the school systems revealed that the Kenyan government allocates approximately KSH. 1000 (approx. US\$10) for each student in school per year. This is barely enough to cater for schools’ needs, including paying teachers. In turn, this forces the school to charge extra fees in order to keep up with the demand to provide quality education.

40 APHRC. (2015). It is Time the Ministry Included Slum Children in the Free Education Bonanza. <https://aphrc.org/blogarticle/its-time-ministry-included-slum-children-in-the-free-education-bonanza/>

4.2.2 ADEQUATE: QUALITY

“The Government allowed the private sector to dominate. We have more private institutions, and the private sector is doing better than the Government schools. The Government is supposed to set the standard, but they do not; they have no monitoring mechanism to check the quality of education.” (Key Informant, Nairobi).

The lack of adequate resources and congestion calls to question the quality of education offered by public institutions in Dakar and Nairobi. Literature shows that understaffing and overcrowding are major issues for urban schools in Kenya, where classes meant to hold 80 students have doubled, with the same teachers handling this expansion (Oranga, et al., 2020). In turn, the quality of education is compromised. The key informants expressed disappointment in the government, stating that it has no political will to improve education and has failed to set up monitoring mechanisms that would help improve the quality of education.

Overcrowding coupled with many strikes in public schools create the perception that private schools offer a better quality of education. In Dakar, in addition to overcrowding of classes at approximately 90 students, key Informants mentioned that there are many strikes in public schools, which has also led parents into believing that education in private schools is better. In fact, many youth do not see the need to go to school, as they do not see any prospects of getting jobs in the future, so they see education as a waste of money and time. This notion is also corroborated in the report by the National Agency for Statistics, which states that the working population is made up of uneducated people, at 52.7%. Regionally, the share is higher in rural areas, at 72.5%, of the uneducated, compared to urban areas, at 45.5%.

In Dakar, the share of the uneducated working population is 24.6%. In Kenya, there have been cases of school children burning down schools because they feel that their grievances are not being addressed.⁴¹ Unfortunately, these schools usually cater to the poor as the wealthy take their children to private schools with more resources.

“People don’t believe the quality of public schools is good. People take their kids to private schools, and also, there are a lot of strikes in public schools. Also, people don’t have perspectives for future employment. They don’t believe in schools; they think it is a waste of time and money.” (Key informant, Senegal).


The lack of resources and overcrowding have led to many parents pulling their children from public to private schools, yet they can barely afford them, and the quality of these schools is unclear.

A Friedrich Ebert Stiftung survey in 2021 in Kenya showed that urban residents believe that the private sector is key to service provision (FES, 2022). While this belief is generally true, reflected in the proliferation of private schools, some of the pro-poor low-cost schools only meet the minimum certification requirements and still charge much more than the public schools in Nairobi. It is estimated that some parents can pay up to 40% of their income to these schools.⁴² This trend suggests that the policies put in place by the Kenyan government to offer Free Primary Education policy is leading to further inequalities between the poor and the wealthy.

“Understaffing and overcrowding are major challenges for schools in Nairobi, while overcrowding and strikes in public schools plague Dakar.”

41 Cooper, E. (2021). Kenyan Students Keep Setting their schools on Fire. Where's the Alarm. African Arguments. <https://africanarguments.org/2021/12/kenyan-students-keep-setting-their-schools-on-fire-wheres-the-alarm/>

42 Shiundu, A. (2019). Dissatisfaction with “Free” Primary Education. <https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/kenya-even-poor-parents-send-their-kids-private-schools>



"Private schools do not always offer quality education yet charge high fees, further disenfranchising the Urban Invisibles"

In Senegal, a similar situation is seen where private schooling has led to more urban inequalities, where only the wealthy have access to good quality education, suggesting that free basic education does not benefit the Urban Invisibles (Grysole, 2018). Key informants also highlighted these problems by stating that the very wealthy individuals are able to send their children to well-resourced schools, while the poor do not have many opportunities within the public school systems due to the challenges of inadequate funds to run the schools. In this case, the wealthy receive a very good quality education compared to their poor counterparts, which is not just.

4.2.3 PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

“Sometimes they build shelter for children to study in. Issue in accessibility – rainy season inundated. Some schools cannot be assessable because of the floods or water on the way. Also, water and toilets are shared between boys and girls and is a problem for girls to access.” (Key informant, Senegal).

Physical accessibility of schools can be challenging depending on where families live in urban areas. In Nairobi, some key informants stated that informal settlements in Nairobi have many private schools provided by NGOs, but do not have many public schools. In fact, a search of schools in Kibera shows that out of over 147 primary schools in the area, only four have been classified as public schools.⁴³ And, as earlier indicated, these private schools charge more than the public schools, making them unaffordable as families have to struggle to pay the fees. In Senegal, physical access is sometimes impacted by the weather.

For instance, heavy rains in Dakar usually prevent students from physically accessing schools, and as such, these students can potentially fall behind during the rainy seasons. In addition, the physical infrastructure in schools is limiting, where bathrooms are shared between girls and boys, which potentially makes it hard for girls to attend school during their monthly menses due to fear of being ridiculed by the opposite gender.

Most of the public schools do not cater to the physically disabled. Many schools are not designed to cater to the physically disabled, making their access to educational facilities a major challenge. In addition, while the education policies have focused on income inequality and the rural-urban divide, policies on children with disabilities are lacking. Yet education for these children is key to their development and future livelihood success (Moyi, 2017). The lack of physical accessibility leads to low enrollment rates for these children. Some disabled children cannot access schools because of lack of wheelchairs, and the schools cannot accommodate them due to a lack of infrastructure facilities that cater to the disabilities. Also, only very few teachers have been trained to cater for children with disabilities (Battle, 2020). The combination of these factors that lead to inequalities based on physical attributes makes most schools unjust.

There is also a rural-urban divide, where schools in urban areas have more access compared to rural areas. Research has shown that while the majority of the students live in rural areas, as Kenya is yet to fully urbanize, these schools lack adequate funds. In turn, they experience shortages in school supplies such as books. In addition, rural children often have to walk several kilometers to access schools (Ibid.).

“Heavy rains prevent physical access to schools in Dakar.”

43 Open school. http://openschoolskenya.org/static/blog-images/kibera_schools_a1_final.pdf

In Senegal, key informants state that most education centres are located in Dakar, even though most people still live in rural areas. As such, to access some of these schools, such as higher education, many have to travel to Dakar and leave their families behind. This causes a strain for the family as they have to find accommodation for their children and provide for them as they attend school, yet most of the families are already struggling to provide for the families.

4.2.4 EFFECT OF COVID-19

In addition to these existing challenges, Covid-19 has further increased inequality in access to education. Both the Senegalese and the Kenyan governments tried to offer lessons online or through broadcasting. Unfortunately, due to high rates of poverty, many students were unable to access these services. In Kenya, key informants stated that the wealthy in Nairobi were able to hire private tutors, something the poor couldn't afford. A Kenyan Economic Update (2020) publication shows that only one in ten households had access to their teacher during the pandemic, with the highest share in urban areas, at 21%, compared to rural areas, at 7%.

While the Ministry of Education provided many platforms for home learning, most of these platforms were not successful, with only radio reaching 9% of students in rural areas and 10% of students in urban areas. This limited access to education and teachers has lasting effects that can hinder the growth of human capital. In addition, now that school is back in session and to curb the spread of Covid-19, students have to sit outside of class in the slums and are not allowed to share textbooks, something which used to happen pre-Covid-19. In turn, children without textbooks are lost in class with no reference points, which exacerbates inequality.

“Wealthy parents could either hire private tutors or have resources for the children to access online classes, while the urban poor could not, and as such, their children were left behind.”

Similarly, in Senegal, the government tried to air lessons through television, but not all children had access. However, private schools had online classes, and the parents of such students were able to afford the resources to ensure they did not fall behind. As such, these students were more privileged. A publication on the effect of Covid-19 shows that only 4.5% of the students had contact with their teachers during the closure of schools in Senegal. In turn, this led to many repetitions as most students were unable to pass their exams to proceed to the next grade. Unsurprisingly, repeaters have not increased much in private schools, suggesting these schools managed the pandemic well (Mbaye, 2021).

“Private schools had online programs but not public schools. The government tried to do some programs on TV, but if you did not have a TV, you could not access it. So, children in private school are more privileged.” Key Informant Senegal.

4.2.5 SUMMARY

This section has shown that access to education is not “just” in both Nairobi and Dakar, both of which characterized by the lack of affordability, accessibility, and adequacy. These challenges show the need to have reforms to ensure that education is truly accessible to all, including the Urban Invisibles. Now, more than ever, the pandemic has shown the extent to which poverty and inequality can disenfranchise the poor and the need for inclusive policies, political will, and implementing mechanisms to ensure that no one is left behind. Access to education is particularly important because it determines how productive a city can be. More educated citizens would have access to more secure jobs, increasing productivity and overall economic development and human well-being in these cities.

“What are good or inclusive policies if they cannot be adequately implemented? Institutional capacity, political will, and well-defined implementation mechanisms can contribute towards just cities.”



One such reform is the need to provide adequate budgeting to ensure public schools have the necessary resources to operate effectively. There is a need to ensure more resources in the government-owned public schools to ensure all children benefit from the Free Primary Education policies. The resources include providing books and other physical attributes such as desks, offering proper training to teachers, including how to address disabilities, and offering adequate salaries, among others. This would improve both the adequacy and affordability of schools, in turn preparing the children, especially the urban poor, to be responsible citizens without further pushing their families into poverty.

In addition, there is a need to regulate the mushrooming of private sector schools, as some have turned into profit-making

schemes that exploit the Urban Invisibles.

The lack of regulation has led to manipulation of the citizens by the so-called low-cost private schools as their quality of education is not well monitored or assessed. In fact, research shows that some of these schools aim to maintain the "status quo of the informal settlements, including the fact that these areas are hard-to-reach, in terms of provision of education, owing to the fact that they live in unplanned settlements or because of their insecurity."⁴⁴ Regulations would also ensure that the private sector doesn't manipulate the poor and that private education is of good quality, accessible, and affordable to the poor. Above all, there is a need to develop adequate implementation mechanisms for Free Basic Education policies to ensure that these policies are well implemented and that everyone benefits, making cities just.

44 Malenya, F. (2020). PP 328



Discussion:
Summary of
Findings

05

There are several key overarching challenges and bottlenecks that need to be addressed to improve service delivery of public services and reduce the inequality that perpetuates poverty. These overarching challenges are discussed below.

Failing to plan for urbanization is planning to fail, which will further exacerbate the situation of the urban poor. As discussed above, both cities are urbanizing at a high rate, and while the share of urban population is lower in Nairobi compared to Dakar,⁴⁵ the city hosts most of its population in informal settlements. In addition, urbanization in both cities is characterized by rural exodus and not urban pull, suggesting that these cities have not witnessed the structural transformation characterized by high productivity. Instead, the cities are characterized by high informality and the services sector, which tend to have lower productivity. In turn, such cities cannot witness adequate growth to reduce poverty. In addition, the moderate growth experienced by the cities only benefits a few individuals, further widening the inequality gap. Within this backdrop, both cities are also characterized by a young population who are uneducated and lack access to basic services, such as healthcare and sanitation. The combination of all these factors paints a very dire situation that needs to be addressed with the utmost urgency.

The lack of investment in the youth will ultimately minimize the opportunities for these cities to achieve demographic dividends from a demographic transition. In Senegal, the youth population that is not in “education, employment, or training” is at approximately 33% of the total population, while in Kenya, this population is at 20%.⁴⁶ In addition, in Kenya, the youth account for 29%, while those who are below 15 years old (youth of tomorrow) account for 39% of the population,⁴⁷ and in Senegal, the population between ages 15 and 34 years account for approximately 34% of the total population.⁴⁸ While the two countries have a high share of young people, their governments are not ensuring that this population has adequate education, and yet education has the ability to reduce multigenerational poverty and improve people's well-being.

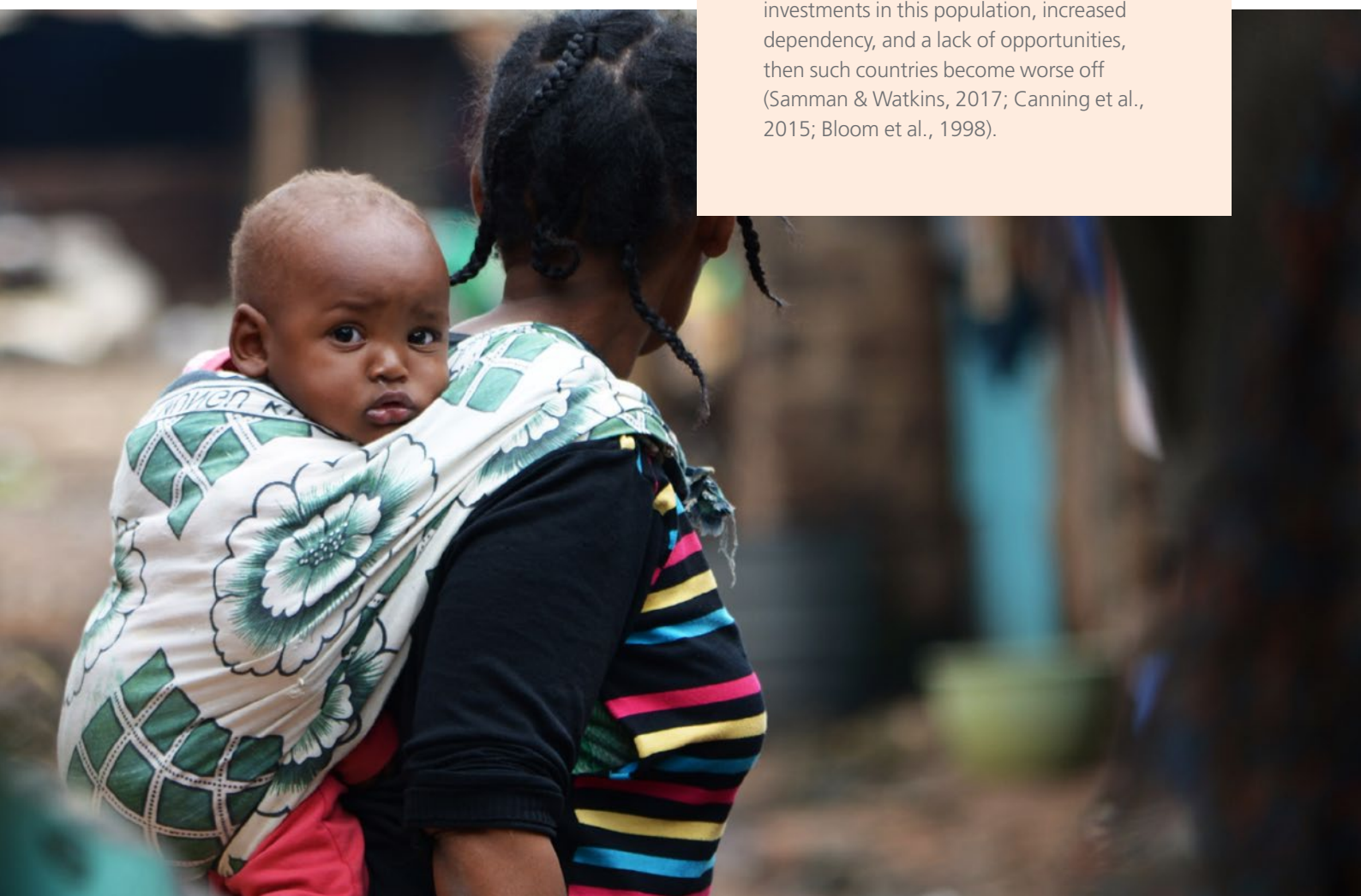
Fighting inequality is a generational battle, and the young play a significant role in this fight, especially in cities that would drive a demographic transition.

45 As indicated in the above section, Nairobi hosts approximately 33% of the total urban population in Kenya, while Dakar hosts approximately 50% of the total urban population in Senegal.

46 The World Bank (2022). <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.UEM.NEET.ZS?locations=SN-KE>

Catering for this population and ensuring they are well educated will help make these cities and countries more just. Above all, as the cities and countries invest in this population, it is also paramount that it creates opportunities for the population by ensuring that the cities can drive economic growth and have enough job creation opportunities for the youth to contribute to. These cities can witness a demographic transition with high urbanization rates, higher human capital, and opportunities. In turn, this will help make the cities just by giving all children and youth equal opportunities and ensuring they are well-prepared for the future.

A **demographic transition** occurs when both fertility and mortality rates decrease as a country develops, which generates a shift from high to low dependency ratios, which then accelerates human development (Samman & Watkins, 2017). As child mortality declines, followed by low fertility rates, a youth bulge is created, with fewer dependents. This then creates an opportunity for "demographic dividends" or a "demographic bomb." The dividends occur when policymakers invest in this population where there are opportunities to absorb this population, thereby boosting productivity and economic growth. Conversely, if there are inadequate investments in this population, increased dependency, and a lack of opportunities, then such countries become worse off (Samman & Watkins, 2017; Canning et al., 2015; Bloom et al., 1998).



47 NCPD. (2020).

48 According to projections by ANSD (2020), the total population stands at 16.7 million, and the population between the ages 15 to 34 stands at approximately 5.6 million. https://investinsenegal.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rapport-sur-la-Population-du-Sngal-2020_03022021-1.pdf

The lack of resources in education service provision disproportionately affects the urban poor and creates unjust cities. Key stakeholders in both countries have expressed the challenge of understaffing in schools, lack of books and other physical attributes such as desks, lack of skills among teachers, and a lack of adequate salaries among teachers. For instance, in Kenya, the educational facilities lack basic items such as textbooks, especially within the schools in urban slums. Also, all schools ask parents to pay some fees to help run the schools and pay salaries. This further disenfranchises the poor who cannot afford the fees charged or textbooks. In Senegal, similarly, there are not enough resources in schools to provide quality education, so most graduates are unemployable. In turn, many people do not see the need to pursue an education as they cannot quantify the value of education. It is, therefore, prudent that students are well-counseled and prepared to attend school while at the same time providing resources to ensure these schools provide quality services.

The lack of adequate resources goes hand in hand with a lack of adequate budget allocation. Many key stakeholders in Kenya expressed concern about the lack of adequate budget allocation to the devolved⁴⁹ county governments, despite the implementation of devolved governments. It is argued that most of the budget remains at the central levels, paralyzing the county governments as they are unable to cater to their populations. This lack of budgeting is characterized by the lack of adequate public schools and their inability to manage the intake due to the implementation of the laws and policies of free basic education in both countries. This, in turn, leads to mushrooming of private schools, some of which further exploit the Urban Invisibles, leading to unjust cities.

While the private sector has been instrumental in complementing the public sector, there is a lack of oversight, especially in poor urban areas, perpetuating intra-urban inequalities. In the education sector, there is an influx of the private sector, which complements services provided by the government. Usually, this sector is not accessible to the poor, as they charge hefty fees for their services—in both cities, the private sector, which offers better education facilities, is unaffordable to the urban poor. However, as discussed above, those that are affordable are not well-regulated and are manipulating the poor in some cases. In turn, this further perpetuates inequality, leaving the *Urban Invisibles* with no recourse and leading to unjust cities.

A lack of political will was also raised as a major challenge in the provision of services. This is especially visible in budgeting, policy oversight, and procurement processes. Free primary education was implemented to ensure everyone has a right to compulsory and good quality education; however, this has not been the case, mainly due to the failures by the government to offer oversight and ensure that the policy is well implemented. For instance, the government has allowed the proliferation of low-cost private schools in poor urban settlements. The private schools have incentives such as tax breaks and low interest start loans meant to help allocate more resources to the public schools, which is not the experience observed (Malenya, 2020). Instead, this lack of oversight has further expanded the gap between the wealthy and the *Urban Invisibles*.

49 The constitution of Kenya (2010) established 47 counties as lower-level government in charge of service provision, including education.



Is free basic education a failed promise?

The failure to adequately translate the policy into an implementation framework that would benefit everyone, including the Urban Invisibles, shows a lack of political will.



The pandemic has further increased inequality between the wealthy and the urban poor. The lack of resources for most children, especially those from a disadvantaged background, to access education due to the pandemic has further worsened the gap between the haves and the have-nots, such as the Urban Invisibles. In addition, the reviewed literature showed that although the informal sector employs the majority of the population, the government failed to cushion them during the pandemic, yet focused on the formal sector, which only employs a small portion of the population. In this case, how can cities be termed as just when they cannot cater to all their citizens? How can a city progress when some of its population is left behind? And how can cities be prepared to ensure that they are planned to cater to everyone?

Addressing these challenges will be key to ensuring that the countries, especially cities, can cater to the growing population and that people's well-being improves.

As discussed above, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the poverty reduction process in both countries, especially in the cities. This shows the need to protect the most vulnerable and ensure that they are cushioned from the negative impact of the shocks. With high urbanization rates, it is more prudent to address these challenges adequately. More specially, the lack of education facilities has a big impact on people's well-being and the capacity of these cities and countries to cater to the population, and in turn, reduce poverty and inequality.

How can a city be classified as being just when it cannot cater for its entire population, including the Urban Invisibles?



Pathway to Just
Cities

06

Urbanization is a force that cannot be stopped and everyone has a role to play to ensure the process is well managed.

Plan for urbanization to ensure cities have the capacity to cater for their populations, including the *Urban Invisibles*. As shown above, the presence of high urbanization and low levels of economic growth and productivity, and lack of resources, lead to high inequality rates, especially in cities, that further perpetuate poverty. Urbanization is a force that cannot be stopped. As such, it is paramount that everyone, including the national and county governments and the citizens, plays a role to ensure that this process would indeed benefit the people. Also, while the focus on economic growth is important, it is not adequate to reduce poverty and inequality; as such, more focused interventions on the Urban Invisibles are needed. Within the context of this paper, the following are proposed as key pathways forward that would aid in reducing poverty and inequality and contribute to just cities.

Cater to the informal sector as it is critical to the economy and employs the majority of the population, especially in cities.

This paper has shown that the workers in the informal sector lack access to basic necessities, including social protection, in both cities, and this was made worse by the pandemic. It is critical that both the national and local governments find ways to ensure the workers in the informal sector have social protection and that they are protected during major calamities, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Inclusive policies should be developed,

and where they exist, they should be well implemented to ensure that the informal sector workers are not left behind. In addition, with the consideration that infrastructure is critical to productivity because of the interconnectedness, as both governments plan for urbanization, they should ensure they build inclusive infrastructure that would also help the informal economy actively participate in the economy. For instance, construction of market shades, equipped with sanitation facilities, as well as encouraging the informal workers to form associations to advocate for their issues would be instrumental (FKE, 2021).

Invest in the youth, as they are the future.

The case study has shown that youth are dropping out of school and that there are high levels of unrest that cause destruction and lead to a lack of access to education. These strikes mainly occur in public schools, suggesting that the poor are most affected. In turn, the situation further perpetuates inequality and increases the level of poverty. Thus, it is critical that government institutions at all levels target the youth and children to ensure that they get the basic skills needed to improve human capital. This is critical as unemployment levels are on the rise in both countries, especially among the youth, as shown in the literature above.⁵⁰ Thus, access to education is vital, especially during high levels of urbanization, because it will ensure that the youth can contribute to the economy when the time is right for demographic dividends to be realized. It is, thus, imperative that this population is

well-targeted through programs that would make them appreciate the need for education and its impact on their lives and countries at large. These types of programs should be incorporated in the education curriculum, as well as in churches and other social arenas. This means that all citizens have a role to play to shape the future of these children.

Streamline the implementation mechanisms for service delivery of public goods in cities to cater for the growing population, especially the Urban Invisibles.

The case study on access to education in Dakar and Nairobi has shown that a lack of adequate budget allocations can further disfranchise the poor and expand the inequality gap. More specifically, lack of resources can lead to a lack of affordability as parents are required to pay additional fees despite the Free Basic Education policy. Also, the quality of education is compromised due to overcrowding, lack of skills and motivation among teachers, physical inaccessibility, especially among the disabled, among other factors. As such, the national and city governments should ensure that public schools, especially in informal settlements, get adequate funding to ensure that these schools are better equipped to deliver as promised by the policies in place.

Develop a monitoring mechanism to better regulate the private sector in the provision of education in cities to prevent the growth of inequality.

There is no doubt that the increase in private schools has been instrumental in supplementing service provision in the education sector. However, the lack of mechanisms to better regulate these entities has led to the proliferation of profit-making institutions that claim to provide low-cost quality education, when this is not always the case. In addition, the private

schools that are indeed able to provide good quality education are not affordable to the Urban Invisibles. To address these challenges, the national and local governments should develop and implement monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the private sector delivers good quality service, truly complements the public sector and ensures no child is left behind. Within this monitoring mechanism, it would be critical to ensure all privately operating schools are legally registered with the national government and have all the paperwork to operate. Citizens also have a role to play to hold these schools accountable, so they stay true to their promises.

Above all, political will be critical to reducing inequalities in cities in the wake of rapid urbanization. Government institutions at all levels have a role in ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their background or social-economic status, benefit from public good service provision and have the right to access basic needs, including education.

This paper has shown that the lack of inclusion in the provision of public goods is affected by various structural, political, and a lack of implementation mechanisms that would ensure policies and regulations are well-implemented. For instance, the Urban Invisibles lack social protection, access to (good quality) education and basic necessities, such as food and sanitation, and yet there are policies in place that state that every citizen has a right to live a fulfilled life. It is important to note that policies need adequate accompanying implementation and monitoring mechanisms that are well funded and given priority to ensure that they work as designed. Also, key to this process is the political will and the need to separate the provision of public goods from political interference.

50 In Kenya, unemployment as a percent of the total labor force increased to 5.73% in 2020 from 5.01% in 2019. In Senegal, it increased to 3.63% in 2020 from 2.86% in 2019. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=SN-KE>

Beyond political will, there is a need to ensure that policies are adaptable to the changing context. Key informants and available literature discussed above have shown that structural factors influenced by colonialism define political processes and development. Unfortunately, this can lead to elitism and higher levels of inequalities, where only a few benefit from such structures. Thus, it is critical for government officials and the citizens at large to realize when policies no longer benefit the people being served,

especially the poor. Officials at all levels should invest in research and development, understand the local context and the people they serve, and hold dialogues with citizens to understand what challenges they face. The voice of the citizens, especially the Urban Invisibles, is extremely critical for service delivery in cities. Only by being informed can officials truly serve the people who elected them and keep true to their promises, in turn, ensuring that everyone benefits, including the Urban Invisibles.



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Annex

08

KII Guide

To ground the research, these questions were asked within the framework of accessibility (physical access by all social groups), affordability (is it affordable to all social groups), and adequacy (Services provided at acceptable levels).

1. How just is the distribution of urban public goods in African cities?

- a) How just do you consider that the distribution of public goods (such as access to education and healthcare)?
- b) Does the state provide such goods (education facilities and healthcare) to the residents of the city? Why?
- c) How does the state decide on the geographical location for these public goods?
- d) Do you believe these goods are accessible to all, especially the urban poor (physical, affordable, acceptable)?
- e) In your opinion, what causes divided cities in your country, where one population has more access to these goods than others?

2. Effect of Covid-19 on distribution and access of public goods

- a) How has the Covid-19 Pandemic affected the accessibility and distribution of these public goods?
- b) Which urban population would you say were most affected? And why?
- c) What was done to assist the most affected population during the Pandemic to ensure they accessed the basic services needed to survive?
- d) What do you think could have been done to help the affected population during the Pandemic?

3. How would a more just distribution of urban public goods look like?

- a) In your opinion, how would a more just (accessible, affordable, and acceptable) distribution of these public goods look like, in general?
- b) How would this just distribution look like post the Pandemic?

4. Changes needed to effect a more just distribution and access of public goods.

- a) What needs to be done to achieve a just distribution of these urban public goods?
- b) Which actors should be targeted to support a fairer distribution of public goods, and why?
- c) What kind of reforms (institutional and policy-oriented) would be needed to achieve a more equitable distribution of public goods?

5. Closing Questions: Best practices

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- a) What lessons have you learned from the Pandemic that you believe would impact future planning for the just distribution of urban public goods?
- b) If you had the opportunity to implement three changes to ensure a just city (in terms of accessibility, affordability, and acceptability), what would those changes look like?
- c) Anything else you would like to share with me?

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