Barriers to Family Planning Among the Urban Poor

Reducing Inequities: Ensuring Universal Access to Family Planning

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Key Points

• The world is now majority urban and nearly all future population growth will occur in urban areas of the developing world

• Globally, a third of the urban population live in slums, 78% in the least developed countries

• The primary driver of urban growth is natural increase, often due to unwanted fertility

• Understanding the barriers the urban poor face in accessing family planning services is essential to addressing global population growth

• Opportunities for sustained significant impact are great
Rural-Urban Populations by Region, 1950-2050

Source: UN Population Division, World Population Prospects 2008 Revision
Urban and Rural Population Size of the Developing World

Source: United Nations 2008 Revision
The majority of urban residents in the Least Developed Countries live in slums, with poor social services and livelihood opportunities...
Trends in urban and rural poverty

Source: The World Bank 2004: World Development Indicators
Sources of Urban Growth in Africa & the Developing World

- Natural Increase
- Rural-Urban Migration + Reclassification

Developing Countries:
- Natural Increase: 60
- Rural-Urban Migration + Reclassification: 40

Africa:
- Natural Increase: 75
- Rural-Urban Migration + Reclassification: 25
Urban and Rural Births in Nigeria from 1950 to 2030

Births

Year

Urban

Rural
Unwanted Fertility by Wealth and Residence in Selected African Countries

Source: Demographic & Health Survey
Some key questions

• Do the urban poor have worse contraceptive and RH outcomes?
  – Who is the appropriate comparison?

• Should we focus on the urban poor or on slum residents?
  – Are there unique slum effects?
### Wealth Index and Amenities in Large Cities, Kenya, Senegal, Nigeria, and Tanzania

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zero Amenities</th>
<th>1-2 Amenities</th>
<th>All 3 Amenities</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kenya: Poorest</strong></td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>39.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Least poor</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>86.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43.6</td>
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Planning status of current pregnancy by wealth and amenities in large cities, Kenya DHS 2003

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<th>Later</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wealth: Poorest</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Least poor</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
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So what are the barriers to family planning among the urban poor, especially slum residents?
Physical/Geographic barriers

- The urban poor often live in informal settlements that are largely excluded from formal services – esp. FP
- Poor urban residents may have to travel outside their neighborhood for high quality and free or low cost family planning services
- Many urban poor people are ‘time poor’, reducing their ability to access services
Fertility & Ideal family size by wealth quintiles

Source: Kenya Demographic & Health Survey, 2003
Service barriers

- Government services in the vicinity of informal settlements are often in poorer state and lack key supplies than clinics in other parts of cities.
- Private providers are poorly regulated and may not be well integrated into the public health sector.
- Private services may be of poor quality and lacking in basic facilities and supplies.
- Private providers may charge high user fees for contraceptives.
Access to Health Services in Slums
Financial barriers

- 97% of Africans cannot afford to pay the full cost of modern contraceptives.
- The urban poor residents rely on cash for their basic needs, and given the high cost of living in urban areas, may not afford to pay the cost of contraceptives.
Knowledge and attitude barriers

- Misinformation and rumors can undermine use of contraceptives even in areas with high unmet need for family planning
- Reproductive health knowledge levels are as low in some poor city neighborhoods as in remote villages
- The localized networks of the urban poor may reduce their awareness about contraceptive methods and services
Opposition & Lack of Knowledge as Reasons for Non-use of FP

Ghana
- Opposition: 7
- Knowledge: 2

Kenya
- Opposition: 4
- Knowledge: 2

Senegal
- Opposition: 3
- Knowledge: 2

Tanzania
- Opposition: 3
- Knowledge: 0

Legend:
- Red: None
- Green: All 3
Social barriers

Slum environments are characterized by:

- High levels of substance use
- Early sex
- Transactional sex and age asymmetry of sexual partners
- High rates of sexual and gender-based violence

Each of these put women and adolescent girls at high risks of unplanned pregnancies
... slum dwellers start sexual activity at an earlier age than their counterparts in non-slum areas

KDHS, Nairobi City 2003 and NCSS 2000
Opportunities for overcoming the barriers

- Leverage existing private sector for PPP
  - Social franchising of services
  - Set standards and enhance regulation
- Exploit the numbers
  - Explore alternative financing options
  - Cheaper costs of delivering services
- Strengthen community-based family planning information and services
- Target urban poor men and young people as well as women
- Adopt a more comprehensive healthcare approach
Thank you

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Concluding Thoughts

• Majority of the urban population currently reside in urban informal settlements and experience high levels of unmet need for contraceptives

• Growing poverty & widening fertility gap means larger proportions of children are born in poverty

• The indicators for the urban poor will increasingly drive national indicators

• The urban poor experience several barriers to family planning but offer unique opportunities for significant impact
AT APHRC…

• We bring together …
  – Multi-country (from 13 African countries)
  – Multi-disciplinary team
    • Demography, Biostatistics, Health Economics, Development Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, Sociolinguistics, Public Health, Epidemiology, Education Policy/Planning
  – 20 PhDs and 20 MA/MSc/MPH degree holders
  – 17 Administration and Support Staff
  – 50+ Field and Data Entry Staff

• To address these issues in pursuit of our mission of:
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Media engagement
Network creation & collaboration

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Fellowships
Training workshops
Support to universities