

Youth on the Move: Welfare effects on originating households in Malawi

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Background

- The world is now experiencing high rate of migration in human history which is dominated by rural-urban migration.
- There is frequent movement of the people from rural to urban areas in most parts of the world arising from various developments, particularly youths.
- In 2013, United Nations habitant estimated that more than half of world's population is now living in urban areas and a continued increase is expected in the next four decades.
- Developing countries constitute a large proportion of people living in rural areas in the world and it is in these countries where there is increased urban population growth rate.
- Most of these countries depend much on agriculture for their economies.
- A lot of households in developing countries depend on farming as their main source of livelihood with family labour as the main source of labour.
- Migration of family members from rural to urban

areas might have implications on the household members left behind.

- Migration is also common among sub-Saharan African countries and Malawi is not exceptional.
- In Malawi, migration dates back to the 1960s after attaining independence.
- Movement from rural to urban areas within the country is usually based on factors such as; looking for better living conditions i.e. to earn income to supplement what they get from agricultural production.
- This is usually common among the youth. The government of Malawi has put in place strategies to address migration problem in the country.

Why Rural Youth Migrate?

- **Agricultural shocks:** These shocks include floods, droughts, prolonged dry spells, pests and diseases.
- **Total livestock units:** Households with productive assets such as livestock are less likely to have youths who migrated to an urban area. Livestock may be used as source of income.



- **Education level of the most educated household member:** The higher the education level of the most educated person in the household, the more likely the household will have at least one migrant to an urban area.
- **Distance to nearest water source:** An increase in the time it takes to reach the nearest water source, increases the probability of having an urban youth migrant. Closer distance to nearest water source increases on-farm productivity which subsequently increases household income.
- **Presence of other household members living in an urban area:** We also found that the presence of other household members staying in an urban area strongly influences the propensity of youth migration among rural households.
- **Location:** Households located in Zomba rural were more likely to have a Youth household member who migrated to an urban area than households in Lilongwe rural.
- **Age of household head**
- **Indebtedness**
- Maize yield was computed as the amount of maize harvested per hectare (kg/ha).
- Poverty status was determined using poverty head count ratio where total per capita expenditure was used.
- It was found that households with urban youth migrant were producing less amount of maize per hectare (almost 13 bags of 50kg) compared to their non-urban youth migrant counterpart.
- This can be attributed to the fact that migration of youth household members was leading to loss of labour for agricultural production which was not compensated by hired labour using the remittances received.
- No significant differences were observed between the two household categories on poverty status.

Recommendations

- The study suggests programmes that will encourage productive asset accumulation such as livestock production, this might influence a reduction in migration.
- Youth initiatives or programmes may be most effective when targeted to locations prone to natural disasters such as prolonged dry spells or other shocks that impedes crop production.
- Improved employment opportunities such as revising the minimum wage rate that will improve living standards in rural areas.

Welfare implications of rural-urban youth migration on originating households

- Household welfare was looked at in two perspectives which are **Maize yield** and **Poverty status**;

