

Analysis Report

# Analysis of Multiple Deprivations in Secondary Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa



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# Executive Summary

Urbanization has been a common phenomenon in the world since the turn of the century, with developing countries and regions witnessing rapid and unprecedented rates of urban growth. The United Nations estimates that more than half of the global population currently resides in cities and towns, with this proportion projected to rise to over 70 per cent by the year 2050. Currently, sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) remains the region with the lowest proportion of the population living in urban areas and cities, with 472 million people – approximately 40 per cent of the total population of the region – living in urban areas and cities. However, sub-Saharan Africa is the world's fastest urbanizing region, with an annual urban population growth rate of 4.1 per cent, in comparison to the world's rate of 2 per cent.

The Southern SSA sub-region has the highest proportion of the overall population in SSA residing in urban areas (more than 70 per cent), followed by West SSA, Central SSA and East SSA respectively. Demographics across the region show that the urban population is predominantly youthful. By 2015, the child and youth population (0-24 years) made up 62.9 per cent of the total population of the SSA region, and 19 per cent of the world's youth population. By 2017, the population aged 0-24 years in SSA stood at 628 million, and this was expected to grow to 945 million by the year 2050, suggesting that more children and youth will be living in urban areas and cities than rural areas. Notably, the SSA region is the only region in the world that is expected to record a positive increase in its child and youth population, with other regions in the world all expected to record declines in their child and youth populations by 2050.

In the SSA region, much of the urban growth has been taking place in secondary towns and cities. According to UN-Habitat, these are towns or cities with a population range of 100,000 and 500,000 persons. Of the 55 per cent of the world's population that is currently estimated to be urban, about 40 per cent reside in secondary towns and cities. This trend is similar in the SSA region, as by 2015, 46.94 per cent of the urban population in SSA was living in towns and cities with less than 300,000 persons. This share was more than other region in the world. Spatial analysis further

shows that the fastest growing secondary towns and cities in the region are located in coastal West SSA, coastal East SSA and around Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika, areas that comprise three of the biggest climate change hotspots in Africa.

However, despite evidence that secondary cities and towns are the epi-centres of urban growth in SSA, many of the urban development and governance interventions have focused more on primary and mega cities, presumably with the expectations of trickle down of social, economic and physical developments to other tiers of towns and cities, including secondary towns and cities. In turn, this has resulted in polarizing effects, with growing gaps in physical and socio-economic development between primary and secondary towns, creating socio-spatial inequalities and multiple deprivations. In line with the demographics of secondary towns and cities, children and youth are the most affected by these inequalities and multiple deprivations .

This report provides an in-depth review of secondary towns in the SSA region from the lens of Indicators of Multiple Deprivations, focusing on city-wide and household-level indicators of deprivation. It is a culmination of analysis of secondary data and case studies on six secondary towns in Kenya and Zambia. It divides deprivations into the dimensions of city/town governance, economic, water and sanitation, living environment, education, health and crime. Furthermore, this report's narrative breaks down these indicators through the lens of children and youth, who are arguably the most affected groups in SSA.

Regarding city-wide level deprivation, secondary cities in SSA are characterized by a domination of primary cities and consequent gaps in urban planning, mainly due to inadequate proper spatial frameworks towards sustainable futures for children and youth. Additional challenges include weak data systems for monitoring growth and informing decision-making, inadequate critical infrastructure and optimal connectivity, and weak economies and low human capital development, all of which can be attributed to weak governance and institutional deficiencies in secondary towns and cities.

On household-level deprivations, four indicators stand out in secondary towns in SSA. These are: Income and Employment; Health; Water and Sanitation; and Housing.

**Income and Employment:** unemployment rates are high in the SSA region, with over 70 per cent of workers in vulnerable employment, compared to the global average of 46.3 per cent. Crucially, unemployment in the region is more pronounced in secondary towns and cities than in primary cities. In Kenya, for example, informal employment is higher in secondary towns (Nakuru, Kisii and Kilifi) than in Nairobi. This is also the case in Zambia where, additionally, poverty and child dependency is higher in Kabwe, Kitwe and Solwezi secondary towns than Lusaka. Notably, youth are the most affected in unemployment across secondary towns and cities in SSA.

**Health:** statistics depict SSA as widely affected by numerous health challenges. The region is home to 60 per cent of people living with HIV in the world, and accounts for 90 per cent of all malaria infections every year. With regard to child health, the region has the highest neonatal death rate in the world, and includes 19 of the 20 countries with highest maternal mortality ratios in the world. Furthermore, 57 per cent of malaria fatalities are children under 5 years of age. Data reveals that secondary towns and cities in the region have more barriers to health and access to health services than primary cities and towns.

**Water and Sanitation:** 695 million of the 2.4 billion people worldwide without access to sanitation reside in the SSA region. For water deprivation, data shows that primary cities have more water piped to dwellings and plots on average than secondary cities. Secondary cities have generally inferior toilet facilities compared to primary cities, including pit latrines without slab and 'bush' (open defecation). Although insufficient and unsafe water supplies and sanitation affect people of all ages, the well-being of young children in secondary towns and cities in the region is particularly compromised. Poor WASH conditions are associated with an increased health burden, with children debilitated by illness, pain and discomfort, primarily from diarrhoeal diseases and other waterborne diseases, such as cholera and enteric fevers, schistosomiasis and guinea worm, heavy intestinal worm, and various skin and eye diseases and infections, such as scabies and trachoma.

**Housing:** the SSA region is considered to have the worst housing conditions in the world, with 60 per cent of the total population in the region living in slums and informal settlements. Housing deprivation is associated with income and employment deprivations, and has a huge impact on other deprivations, such as WASH and living environments. Analysis shows that housing conditions in secondary cities are poorer than conditions in primary cities. Factors that contribute to poor housing conditions in secondary cities in SSA include limited efforts by authorities to plan ahead, land tenure, and poor economic means by urban authorities. For example, in Kenya, 90 per cent of the population of Kilifi town live in informal areas, where tenure is undefined, as opposed to Nairobi, where about 60 per cent of residents live in slums and informal areas. Housing deprivation has a profound impact on all children's lives; poor housing conditions, including physical quality, home hazards and crowding are associated with poor psychological health in the short and long terms. In SSA, poor quality housing lacks proper ventilation, drainage systems, enough living space and standard access streets and neighborhood green spaces; these condition lead to poor health in children, particularly because of increased respiratory conditions and an increase in malaria.

Despite the existing multiple deprivations, secondary cities in SSA exhibit strategic opportunities due to their strategic locations, availability of land and resources, and cultural identities, which provide development advantages for addressing multiple deprivations. However, to address deprivations in the region a paradigm shift is needed to focus on children and youth, who constitute the biggest population group in the region and in secondary cities as well. Additionally, analysis has shown that children and youth are the most affected by urbanization externalities and deprivations.

The Call for Action outlines key messages to the leaders and all stakeholders in SSA. These include: Recognition of secondary towns and cities as current and future frontiers of urban growth and development in sub-Saharan Africa; placing children and youth at the core of policy development, funding and programming for secondary cities; the need to embrace pro-active planning and strong data systems and the use of data to monitor and determine future needs and sustainable plans for secondary towns and cities; and the need to anchor the development of secondary towns and cities on a strong and sustainable economic base.

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