

# MOBILITY ASSESSMENT ON INTERNAL MIGRATION

IOM, THE GAMBIA

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The study has been conducted by IOM Gambia in partnership with the IOM Regional Office with funding from the UK Government through the Department for International Development as part of the "**Safety, Support and Solutions in the Central Mediterranean Route**" programme.

This programme aims to provide protection, direct assistance and durable solutions to migrants across the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR).

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**We also recognise the immense contribution and guidance offered by our Gambia Government counterparts, most notably the Gambia Bureau of Statistics.**

IOM firmly believes that ordered migration, carried out in decent conditions, benefits both migrants and society as a whole. As an intergovernmental body, IOM is working with its partners in the international community to solve practical migration problems, to better understand migration issues, to encourage development through migration and to promote effective respect for human dignity and the well-being of migrants.

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## ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

AVR	Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration
DFID	The United Kingdom's Department for International Development
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KI	Key Informant
LGA	Local Government Area
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WCA	West and Central Africa

## KEY TERMS

Internal migration	A movement of people from one area of a country to another area of the same country for the purpose or with the result of establishing a new residence. An internal migrant is a person that is engaging in internal migration.
Rural to Urban Migrants	The internal migration of people from a rural community to an urban area for settlement or short-term stay.
Urban	A settlement is urban if it has commercial and institutional importance, a majority of the population's occupation is non-agricultural, a total population of at least 5,000, a high population density and a degree of infrastructure is available.
Rural	A settlement that does not meet the criteria of an urban settlement is considered a rural area.
Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration	Logistical and financial support provided by IOM to rejected asylum seekers, trafficked migrants, stranded students, qualified nationals and other migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country who volunteer to return to their countries of origin.
Individual interviews	The process of questioning or talking with a person to obtain information or determine their personal qualities/views on a topic.
Petty trading	Trade that is conducted on a small-scale involving the sale of small and inexpensive items. This is mainly in the informal sector.
Transit community	The community that migrants have temporarily stayed in before relocating to their current community. This is the community of residence between the place of origin and their current locality.

Key Informants	A key informant is a person who has specialised knowledge about the topic you wish to understand. They tend to provide qualitative information that supplements or clarifies what you have learned from surveys, focus groups, and existing data source.
Respondents	Persons being interviewed for a survey.
Migrants	An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students. <sup>1</sup>
Emigration	The act of departing or exiting from one state with a view of settling in another.
Local Government Area	For the purposes of census and surveys, the Gambia Bureau of Statistics divided the country into 8 areas called Local Government Area namely: Banjul, Kanifing, Brikama, Mansakonko, Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh and Basse.
Youth	A youth is defined as someone who is between the age of 15 – 30 according to the National Youth Policy of The Gambia (2009–2018).
Household	This consists of a person or group of persons who live together in the same house or compound, share the same housekeeping and catering arrangements but may not be related.
Informal Sector	The definition of informal sector includes enterprises owned by individuals or households that are not constituted as separate legal entities independent of their owners, have no complete set of accounts, produce some of their goods for sale and their employment size is below 5 employees.

(IOM, 2004; IOM, 2011; OASAS, 2019; GBoS, 2017; GBoS, 2013; GBoS, 2018)

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<sup>1</sup> IOM definition, <https://www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant>



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gambia has a history of internal and international migration, mostly due to its geographical location in the region, and in 2013 (MGSoG, 2017) had the tenth highest emigration rate in Africa. With a population of approximately 2.3 million (UNPD, 2019; GBoS, 2018), 54.6% of residents currently reside in urban settlements across the country, compared to 38% in 1993. The main increase in the urban population occurred between 1993 and 2010 (MGSoG, 2017; GBoS, 2018). The 2013 Population and Housing Census recorded 321,783 individuals as internal migrants. The majority reside in the predominantly urban Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Brikama and Kanifing (GBoS, 2013; GBoS, 2018).

The concentration of migrants in these LGAs may have an impact on the community's development, as it leads to limited access to basic services in the education, energy, and health sectors (including water and sanitation) – this also has a direct impact on the rate of unemployment as proper mechanisms have not been put in place to adapt to this rapid urbanization<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, the significant population movements from rural to urban areas have resulted in labour shortages in the agricultural sector which currently employs 70% of the labour force<sup>3</sup>. Further compounding this issue is the fact that over 60% of the country's population depends on agriculture as a source of income<sup>4</sup>.

This study examines internal mobility dynamics in The Gambia and provides a socio-economic profile of migrants who move from rural to urban settings. Migrants' places of origin and destination, drivers of migration and travel intentions were analysed to further develop the profile. A complementary objective of the study is to consider the profile of rural-to-urban migrants in relation to that of migrants assisted by IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme. Data on migrant journeys and travel intentions was analysed to determine whether there is a link between rural-to-urban mobility and onward migration, either within West and Central Africa and/or beyond.

While the study aims to draw parallels and/or highlight differences in these migration experiences – it also recognises that AVRR beneficiaries do not represent all international migrants and in fact, only captures a very specific sub-sample of all international migrants<sup>5</sup>.

Interviews with migrants and key stakeholders were conducted between November 2018 and January 2019 in 10 communities. Overall, 220 rural-to-urban migrants, 10 community leaders and 137 beneficiaries of IOM AVRR<sup>6</sup> were consulted. As migration in The Gambia tends to be sex and age selective (GBoS, 2013), 69% of rural-to-urban migrant respondents were male. Their migration journey towards urban communities was primarily motivated by the search for new and/or more stable economic opportunities combined with better access to basic services such as health and education. Based on research findings, family reunification is the second motivating factor to leave rural areas for urban settlements. According to the 2013 National Migration Analysis (GBoS, 2013), there has been an increase in female internal migrants in recent years, with 51% moving from rural-to-urban areas. This can be explained by the number of female migrants relocating to meet their husbands in urban areas and/or in search of employment as domestic workers (GBoS, 2013).

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<sup>2</sup> UN-Habitat. (2011). *The Gambia national urban profile*. <http://www.zaragoza.es/contenidos/medioambiente/onu/issue06/1132-eng.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Climate-smart agriculture In the Gambia, FAO, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ca1673en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/country/id/gambia>

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the findings do not pretend that characteristics and determinants of migration of AVRR migrants are similar to international migrants in West Africa (ECOWAS).

<sup>6</sup> With the sample size of this research, the result herein presented is not a representative view of the entire migrant population in the Gambia.

According to the findings, 49% of rural-to-urban migrants have no formal education and only 3% have a tertiary education. In contrast, the AVRR respondents selected for the research tended to have higher levels of education, with 50% having a secondary education and 25% having no formal education. This finding corroborates studies that show that education, as well as desire and intention to migrate, are positively correlated. The only similarity found between the AVRR beneficiaries and rural-to-urban migrants pertained to age: most of migrants are between 18–35 years old.

These results show that the majority of internal migrants from rural to urban areas do not engage in onward international migration. In the case of AVRR beneficiaries, 36% stem from rural areas but spent some time in an urban area before migrating abroad. However, differences in levels of education, age and migratory routes demonstrate that rural-to-urban migration represents a distinct form of human mobility, with characteristics and specificities independent of those of AVRR beneficiaries.

Thirty-four per cent (34%) of rural-to-urban migrants originated from Kerewan LGA and the main LGA of destination for rural-to-urban migrants is Brikama, where 65% of them decide to relocate. The Brikama LGA has the highest population growth rate in The Gambia, followed by Kanifing LGA. Additionally, aside from migrants departing Kerewan LGA, 13% of rural-to-urban migrants are also moving within the Kerewan LGA. Forty-six (46%) of migrants mentioned that the search for better economic opportunities is the main reason influencing their decision to leave their place of origin.

Based on information collected through key informants, a record number of rural migrants are relocating to the 10 urban communities included in this research. The departure dates of rural-to-urban migrants<sup>7</sup> further show that there has been a steady increase of migrants departing rural areas of origin in favour of urban areas over the years. As an example, 66% of rural-to-urban migrants interviewed left their areas of origin between 2000–2018. Although the interviews did not capture the reasons behind the spontaneous increase in travellers starting in 2000, some may be attributed to irregular rainfall patterns that contributed to crop failure in rural communities during that period, pushing rural dwellers to urban centres<sup>8</sup>. Among migrants benefitting from AVRR, the departures observed in recent years, especially from 2015, correspond to the recent migration trend to Libya and Europe. For instance, an estimated 12,792 Gambians arrived irregularly by sea in Italy and Spain in 2016, while between January 2017 and January 2018, 8,661<sup>9</sup> Gambian nationals arrived irregularly by sea to Europe, especially in Greece, Italy, and Spain.

Migration routes used by rural-to-urban migrants also differed from those used by AVRR beneficiaries. Although most rural-to-urban migrants moved directly to their intended destination, 25% of respondents moved to multiple locations, with nearly half stopping in Kanifing LGA, before settling in their final destination. Interestingly, 64% of AVRR beneficiaries migrated directly from their place of origin to a foreign country – they did not travel through multiple communities in The Gambia in search of better opportunities before venturing abroad. Based on the population groups selected for this research, this finding suggests that international movements towards Europe are not as closely linked to internal movements as initially hypothesised<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> During the interview, respondents (rural to urban migrants) in targeted communities provided the departure date from their place of origin. This information was aggregated by year to determine the number of migrants that travelled within a specific year (and date range). It is not fully representative of rural-urban trends within the Gambia in general but does give more clarity on the phenomenon for selected researched localities.

<sup>8</sup> Action aid. (2018). *Backway to Europe: how can the Gambia better address migration and its development challenges?* Banjul: Action Aid. Retrieved from [https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/back\\_way\\_to\\_europe\\_web.pdf](https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/back_way_to_europe_web.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> IOM Flow Monitoring Data, 2017 - 2018.

<sup>10</sup> As stated above we understand that AVRR only captures a very specific subsample of all international migrants, not necessarily representative of international migrants in West Africa (ECOWAS). Therefore, this statement relates to the study samples only.

With respect to future migration plans, 60% of rural-to-urban migrants stated they did not plan to migrate further and 59% of AVRR beneficiaries cited that they had no plans to re-emigrate. Rural-to-urban migrants who did have plans to emigrate mentioned that a European country (27%) is the planned destination, and a lower number identified another African country (1%). Only 9% of rural-to-urban migrants stated that they intend to migrate to another locality in The Gambia in comparison to the 74% that intend to stay in their current urban community. Key informant interviews confirmed this tendency of rural-to-urban migrants staying within their newfound community long-term.

Based on this study, the main recommendations are:

- Encourage both local government authorities and the national government to support investments in Kanifing and Brikama LGAs to respond to the rapid urbanisation and cater for the increasing population. As the population in these regions will likely continue to increase, additional strain on services including health, accommodation, education, and even employment, should be anticipated<sup>11</sup>. Investments should be made to ensure that access to basic amenities is sufficient to cater for the growing population and reduce poverty<sup>12</sup>. This issue requires attention from local administrators but also national government, especially as planning and financing of urban infrastructure require close coordination of multiple stakeholders.
- Support the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Gambia National Youth Council, national and regional youth organisations, as well as district youth groups to create and provide programmes in rural communities to offer sustainable employment alternatives to young residents (18-35). In the Gambia, youth represent almost 60% of the national population<sup>13</sup> and young people are more likely to be affected by the lack of employment opportunities<sup>14</sup>. As this study has shown, young Gambians are the ones engaging the most in migration, both internal and international<sup>15</sup>. Supporting youth empowerment projects and increasing economic resilience of rural zones could be an effective way to ensure residents have an alternative to urban migration.
- Job creation in urban areas will be a considerable challenge moving forward, and it will be imperative to engage the private sector to create a business environment for job creation (beyond trade and construction, which are normally low productivity and volatile to external factors). Lack of public and private investment reflects a weak business environment and limits access to finance.
- Support governments to invest in rural LGAs to promote and create adequate services (education, transport, health, and work) currently more readily available in the urban regions. Study findings indicate that migrants are departing their places of origin in search of better economic opportunities and access to quality services and commodities. These should be made available within the rural communities thus promoting decentralisation. Investing in strong services could also be a way of ensuring sustainable reintegration of returned migrants extending the support provided by IOM through reintegration assistance programmes. Improving quality of services in rural areas could also attract the return of skilled migrants abroad and potentially lower drivers of re-migration from these same areas.

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<sup>11</sup> Idem.

<sup>12</sup> One of the priorities of the *Gambia National Development Plan* (NDP) for 2016–2020 and 2018 - 2021 was to develop a sustainable urban development strategy to be able to respond to the rapid urban growth and to adopt a comprehensive approach reinforcing linkages between rural and urban areas in the country in order to reduce poverty. <http://www.thegambiatimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1.-the-gambia-national-development-plan-2018-2021-full-version.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://nyc.gm/>

<sup>14</sup> According to Altai consulting the youth unemployment rate reached 38% in 2016 in the Gambia.

<sup>15</sup> In this research the group of 26–35 is the most represented for rural-urban migrants and voluntary return migrants assisted by the IOM.

- Encourage local, national and civil society organisations to reinforce spaces for dialogue and mechanisms for interaction with government institutions to better understand migrants and communities' aspiration, frustrations and needs in the short, medium and long-term. It is important that voices of rural-to-urban, returned migrants and host communities are heard to influence decision-making processes at the local and national levels.
- Encourage governmental organisations, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, through the Department of Agricultural services, to invest in sustainable and innovative agricultural practices for communities that depend highly on agricultural production as the main source of income. As agriculture is an important sector in the country, investments in value addition (or value chain production), adoption of innovative and modern farming techniques/tools adapted to temperature variations and climate change effects should be considered. This also presents multiple employment (and educational) options for returned migrants and could help address the high level of youth unemployment rate, reaching 41.5% in The Gambia<sup>16</sup>. Besides, the high NEET<sup>17</sup> rate is an additional concern as 56.8% of the youth falls under this category (LFS, 2018).

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<sup>16</sup> [Labour force survey, 2018. https://www.gbosdata.org/downloads-file/the-gambia-labour-force-survey-glfs-2018](https://www.gbosdata.org/downloads-file/the-gambia-labour-force-survey-glfs-2018)

<sup>17</sup> "Not in employment, education or training (NEET)" category, <https://www.gbosdata.org/downloads-file/the-gambia-labour-force-survey-glfs-2018>

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

According to the World Migration Report 2018 (IOM, 2017), there has been a global surge in internal migration in recent years with an estimated 740 million people moving within their country of origin in 2009. Based on the 2015 edition of the same report, it is noted that international migration, in most cases, begins with rural-to-urban movement. However, there are only a few studies focusing on rural-to-urban mobility in The Gambia. Moreover, differences between migration statistics sources impede government and partner efforts to gain a comprehensive understanding of migration dynamics in the country<sup>18</sup>.

The Gambia has a history of internal and international migration, mostly due to its location in the region, and in 2013 (MGSoG, 2017) it had the tenth highest emigration rate in Africa. With a population of approximately 2.3 million (CIA, 2019; GBoS, 2018), 54.6% currently resides in urban settlements across the country, increasing drastically from 38% in 1993 according to the Gambia Migration Profile (MGSoG, 2017; GBoS, 2018) <sup>[OB]</sup>. In the 2013 Population and Housing Census, 321,783 individuals were recorded as internal migrants with a majority of the population residing in the Brikama and Kanifing LGAs (GBoS, 2013; GBoS, 2018) – LGAs that are predominantly urban. This provides an insight into the steady increase of the population living in urban communities.

Internal migration can be influenced by numerous factors (GBoS, 2013; IOM, 2017) including economic, social, political or infrastructural development (or lack thereof). In the Gambia, one of the most dominant sectors is agriculture. Approximately 70% of the population is involved or employed in the agricultural sector (CIA, 2019) and agricultural lands constitute 43% of arable land available (Gambia Data Portal, 2019). However, the sector has known several crises recently with the impact of climate change and extreme weather events affecting farming production in the country. The lack of access to predictable farming and agricultural livelihoods and employment opportunities often triggers both internal and international migration in The Gambia, as stated in research by ActionAid in 2018. Besides, growth of the industry has not been consistent and has recorded poor performance mainly due to inconsistent rainfall, low private investment in irrigation infrastructure, limited access to input and output markets, outdated farming policies, inadequate domestic policies, and a lack of institutional support/investment (FAO, 2019). With rural communities depending on agricultural production, the poverty level in these areas is still high (UNCT, 2016) – this may also have an influence on internal migration. It is also important to consider that rural households can embark on internal migration to complement sources of income available in the village as well as to access services, including education and health.

Approximately 49% of the national population is male, with the majority residing in the Banjul, Kanifing and Brikama LGAs; women constitute the highest proportion in other LGAs. This distribution of the population demonstrates that migration in The Gambia is sex-selective with men more likely to migrate (GBoS, 2013) especially in search of economic opportunities in urban settings. Additionally, according to the 2013 Population and Housing Census (GBoS, 2013), Kanifing and Brikama LGAs are the main locations of destination for rural-to-urban migrants.

Currently in The Gambia, approximately 65% of the population is below the age of 35 (with 37.2% being between 13 – 30 years old) (GBoS, 2013). From 2003 to 2013, the young population in The Gambia increased from 489,666 to 690,836 accounting for an increase of 41.1%. Additionally, 67.5% of these youth are recorded as literate (GBoS,

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<sup>18</sup> In *The politics of migration governance in the Gambia* (published in October 2017), Franziska Zanker & Judith Altrogge noted that official institutions tend to use different methods to count migrants, resulting in difference migrations statistics and distinct interpretations: “For example, the World Bank migration and remittances factbook from 2016, states that there are 71,000 Gambian emigrants in 2013 and does not present any newer numbers (2016), while the World Development indicators records 82,000 in 2010 and 89,000 in 2015 (United Nations Population Division 2015).”

2013). Within the working age population<sup>19</sup>, youth (15 – 30)<sup>20</sup> face a higher level of unemployment (CIA, 2019; IOM, 2017; GBoS, 2018). The national unemployment rate among youth is 41.5 % (LFS, 2018) and of this group, the majority have no or low levels of education, further contributing to difficulties in access to employment opportunities. Besides, the high NEET<sup>21</sup> rate is an additional concern as 56.8 % of the youth falls under this category (LFS, 2018). The employed population also experience separate challenges; currently, for every 100 persons within working age (15 - 64 years), there are over 140–150 dependents<sup>22</sup> (IOM, 2017). This high dependency rate means that individuals with no or low educational levels will likely face difficulties in accessing highly skilled/paid employment and subsequently impact individuals' capacities to financially support their dependents.

As mentioned earlier, The Gambia has a high emigration rate and with an increase in emigration, there seems to be an increase in remittance flows. Remittances from Gambian emigrants, especially those in the U.S., Spain, and the U.K., accounted for almost 15% of the GDP in 2014 (World Bank Group, 2016). From 2006 to 2015, remittances increased from USD \$64 million to USD \$181 million. As emigration increases, so does the amount of remittances sent back into the country, and so does the impact on the economy and on migrants' families. With high numbers of dependents as cited above, these remittances are an important factor for household sustainability. Economic pressures (financial constraints, factors of unemployment, access to services) tend to have a significant impact on migration flows especially with 48.6% of the population living below the national poverty line (IOM, 2017; GBoS, 2017).

These are all factors that may influence the decision of individuals to migrate internally within The Gambia. According to the 2013 Population and Housing Census, 140,761 individuals have been registered as rural-to-urban migrants, 88,881 as urban-urban migrants, and finally 35,124 as urban-rural migrants<sup>23</sup>. These figures demonstrate that the majority of internal migrants move from rural to urban areas in The Gambia. This raises the question as to the type of migrants moving, the profile of these migrants and whether these movements translate into further cross-border movement.

Data on migration in The Gambia is quite scarce even though a few migration study reports have been produced. This research, while small in scale, aims to contribute to filling the data gap on internal migration in The Gambia. Its main objective is to provide an overview of internal mobility dynamics in The Gambia including migrant origins and destinations, migration drivers, migrant travel intentions, and the socio-economic profile of travellers. This research will focus on the dynamic of *rural to urban* migration.

Through this research, Government agencies can be provided with data on the nexus (where applicable) between internal movement and further cross-border journeys. This will help clarify the drivers of rural-to-urban migration in The Gambia and drivers of onward international migration, for example along the Central Mediterranean Route.

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<sup>19</sup> The working age population in the Gambia is 15–64 years old (GBoS, 2018)

<sup>20</sup> The national youth policy 2009 defines youth as individuals aged between 15 and 30 years old.  
[http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/gambia\\_2009\\_national\\_youth\\_policy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/gambia_2009_national_youth_policy.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> “Not in employment, education or training (NEET)” category, <https://www.gbosdata.org/downloads-file/the-gambia-labour-force-survey-glfs-2018>

<sup>22</sup> This means for every 1 person there are approximately 1.5-2 dependents

<sup>23</sup> These figures refer to migration across local government areas (LGAs).

It is expected that these results can be further used to:

- Create strategic policy briefs to inform Government migration policy;
- Implement policy workshops to share and discuss findings.

Sub-objectives:

- Produce an estimate of rural-to-urban migration in the main urban locations in The Gambia since the start of 2018 (January to October 2018)
- Identify the different rural-to-urban migration types (seasonal, family, education, health, long-term economic, first step before international migration, etc.)
- Identify main routes used by rural-to-urban migration to travel to the main urban locations in The Gambia
- Develop a socio-demographic profile of travellers moving from rural to urban areas
- Identify the drivers of international migration for rural-to-urban migrants and the existing routes by conducting interviews with AVRR

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

With the focus being on *internal* migration – the locations identified were derived from a consultation workshop with Government agencies and NGOs that are directly involved in migration issues. As per the consultation workshop, locations were identified for data collection: Barra, Farafenni, Brikama, and Tanji. However, to conduct a more in-depth analysis, consideration was made for additional locations to be identified to widen the coverage. These locations were selected as main crossing points, and their exit-entry proximity to the Greater Banjul area. The following communities were identified in the different LGAs:

- a. In Kerewan LGA: **Barra** and **Farafenni**
- b. In Brikama LGA: **Brikama**, **Tanji** and **Sukuta**
- c. In Kanifing LGA: **Serrekunda** and **Nema Jola Kunda**
- d. In Kuntaur LGA: **Wassu**
- e. In Mansakonko LGA: **Soma**
- f. In Basse LGA: **Basse**

Figure 1 highlights the community districts across The Gambia where interviews were conducted.

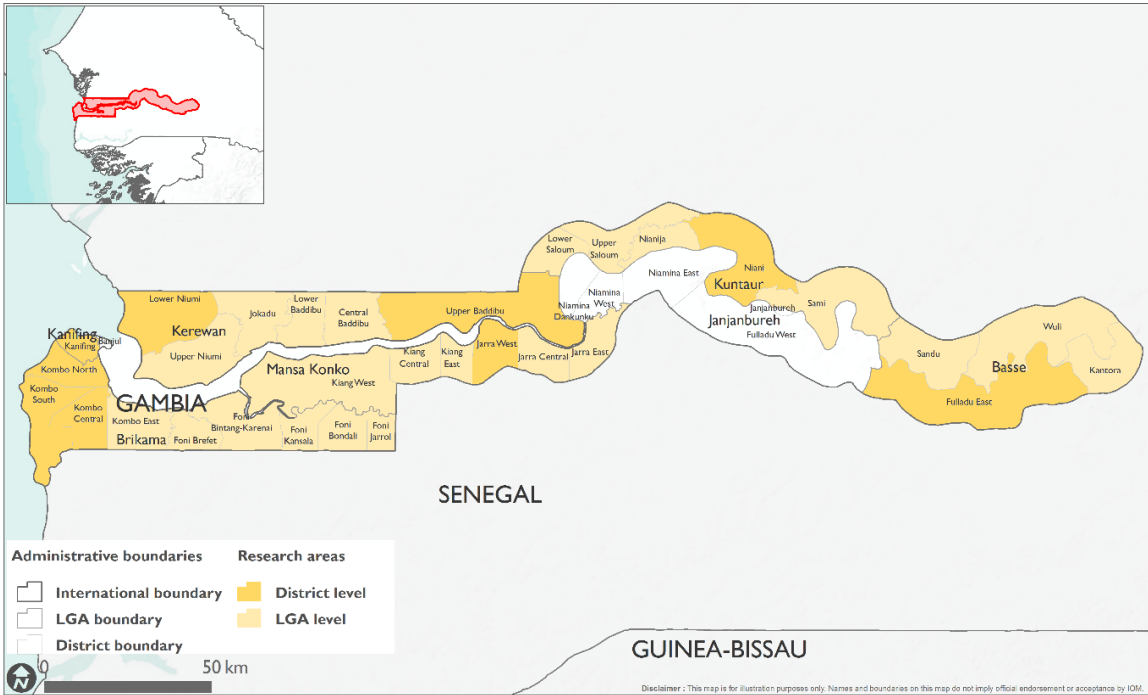


Figure 1: Districts interviewed during the survey.



## TARGET POPULATION

This research targeted different groups of respondents:

- a. **Rural-to-Urban Migrants:** with a specific focus on individuals that moved from rural areas of The Gambia to urban settlements.
- b. **Individuals assisted to voluntary return to The Gambia by IOM (AVRR):** AVRR beneficiaries can be rejected asylum seekers, trafficked migrants, stranded students, qualified nationals and other migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country who volunteer to return to their countries of origin. While AVRR beneficiaries do not represent all international migrants within the Gambia, in the scope of this study it will allow to draw initial comparisons with rural-to-urban migrants with indicators such as age, level of education, journeys, and travel intentions.
- c. **Local Government officials (Key Informants – KI).**

To validate the results of the research, a triangulation method was adopted to ensure that the data is verified with more than one source of data collection method. Therefore, Qualitative and Quantitative methods of data collection were adopted by utilising surveys (individual interviews) and focus group discussions (FGDs).

This methodology is based on four main steps:

- **STEP 1:** The Key informant interviews provided an insight into the migrant population in each community.

*Table 1: LGA and community leaders (Key Informants) interviewed*

Local Government Area (LGA)/Community	Point Person	Local Government Area (LGA)/Community	Point Person
1. Kerewan LGA		4. Kuntaur LGA	
a) Barra	Alkalo	a) Wassu	District Chief
b) Farafenni	Alkalo Representative		
2. Brikama LGA		5. Mansakonko LGA	
a) Brikama	Chief Executive Officer of the Brikama Area Council	a) Soma	District Chief
b) Tanji	Village Development Committee Chairperson		
c) Sukuta	Alkalo		
3. Kanifing LGA		6. Basse LGA	
a) Serrekunda Central	Ward Councillor of London Corner	a) Basse	Alkalo
b) Nema Jola Kunda	Ward Councillor of Latrikunda Sabiji		

- **STEP 2:** Rural-to-urban migrant interviews were conducted in five communities (Barra, Wassu, Farafenni, Basse and Brikama) that attract rural settlers based on desk review and feedback from government stakeholders. The number of respondents targeted was 150 migrants.
- **STEP 3:** Interviews with Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration beneficiaries (AVRR) conducted over-the-phone. These interviews were conducted based on randomly selected sample of 100 AVRR beneficiaries from the IOM database to understand their profile and migratory journey.
- **STEP 4:** Focus group discussions with rural-to-urban migrants: conducted in three (3) communities targeting 30 respondents in Soma, Farafenni, and Tanji. The focus group discussion defined questions on migrant routes and intentions.

The methodology used for this study, though comprehensive, entails some **limitations**:

- With the sample size of this research, the result herein presented is not a representative view of the entire migrant population in The Gambia.
- As stated above, the comparison with AVRR beneficiaries cannot be used to draw conclusions valid for all international migrants moving out of the Gambia. AVRR beneficiaries only captures a very specific subsample of all international migrants, potentially of migrants who aimed for Europe. **Findings and results indicate that characteristics and determinants of AVRR migrants are not similar to international migrants in West Africa (ECOWAS). However, these initial results can be used to frame more in-depth studies on the topic.**
- Additionally, key informants cited limited/unreliable data on the migrant population within their communities – therefore, figures recorded during the Key Informant interviews are to be considered community population estimates.
- A low number of female respondents were recorded.
- The study was not a longitudinal study therefore all results were analysed based on a short period of interview. This assessment was not conducted over a long period of time.

The report compilation phase was conducted in collaboration with the internal IOM DFID team and through the guidance of IOM Regional office Dakar. At the end of the research cycle, IOM Gambia conducted a validation workshop with 14 Government agencies which allowed to directly integrate their feedback into the report. An in-depth review process was also conducted with the Gambia Bureau of Statistics to ensure that all records are in-line with their expectations. This process was lengthy but allowed for an efficient collaboration.

The agencies represented during this workshop were the Gambia Bureau of Statistics, NGO Affairs, Gambia Immigration Department, National Agency Against Trafficking In Person, National Population Commission Secretariat, National Disaster Management Agency, Office of the President, Ministry of Interior, UNICEF, Department of Social Welfare and the National Youth Council. All these agencies provided an insight into the different areas of development in The Gambia.

## RESPONDENTS

As evident in Table 2, the female population interviewed is drastically lower than the male population. According to the enumerators, the female targets were not readily available for interviews as some were preoccupied with varying household activities or simply unwilling to participate. With a predominantly traditional society, women are largely responsible for domestic activities and this could explain why the male respondents were more willing to participate in the survey than the females.

The response rate of the target population is summarised in Table 2:

*Table 2: Total number of respondents disaggregated by gender and population group*

DATA COLLECTION METHOD	RESPONDENTS	TARGET INTERVIEW	ACTUAL INTERVIEW	GENDER
Individual interview	Key Informants	10	10	Male: 10 Female: 0
Focus Group Discussion	Rural-to-urban Migrants	30	34 (+4)	Male: 19 Female: 15
Individual interview	Rural-to-urban Migrants	150	186 (+36)	Male: 129 Female: 57
Individual interview	AVRR beneficiaries	100	137 (+37)	Male: 135 Female: 2
<b>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</b>		<b>290</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>Male: 293 Female: 74</b>

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research finding section is developed based on the following structure:

### 1. To understand the profile and journey of migrants into urban communities.

This section focused on determining migrants' profile to understand the groups travelling. It also assessed the main LGA of origin and destination, the trends in their migratory journey and the similarities in profile and journey between rural-to-urban migrants and AVRR beneficiaries.

### 2. To determine the long-term settlement strategy of migrants in urban communities.

In this section, migrants' main factors for migrating are discussed; it, furthermore, determined if internal migration may be spurred by how well individuals/households are integrated (or not) into their current localities. The intention for migrants to travel further was also assessed in this section.

## 1. THE PROFILE AND JOURNEY OF MIGRANTS INTO URBAN COMMUNITIES

According to the 2013 Population and Housing Census, approximately 321,783 Gambians have moved from their place of origin to another community – of this figure, 140,761 (44%) are recorded as rural-to-urban migrants (GBoS, 2013). A majority of these rural-urban migrants originate from the Kerewan LGA and head towards the Brikama and Kanifing LGA (GBoS, 2013). With such movement of persons, the 2017 report on The Gambia Migration Profile (MGSOG, 2017; CIA, 2019) mentions that approximately 59% of the Gambian population mainly resides along The Gambia River and in urban settlements.

To understand the type of migrants moving between communities, this section will analyse migrants' demographic data, travel patterns and any similarities with AVRR responses.

### 1.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF INTERNAL MIGRANTS: WHO IS MIGRATING TO URBAN COMMUNITIES?

*Age: What age group are mostly migrating?*

The Gambia has a very young population with approximately 65% being below 35 years (IOM, 2017; GBoS, 2013) – this same age group is the most affected in terms of unemployment and other social issues. For each varying age group that migrates, the expected motivation and impact differs. According to a report on migration in The Gambia (IOM, 2017), 76% of rural-to-urban migrants are between the ages of 15–44. Based on research findings, Figure 2 indicates that the highest number of respondents, 34%, are in the 26–35 age group and 23% are in 18–25 age group. It can be inferred that movement mainly occurs in these prime ages (18 – 35 years).

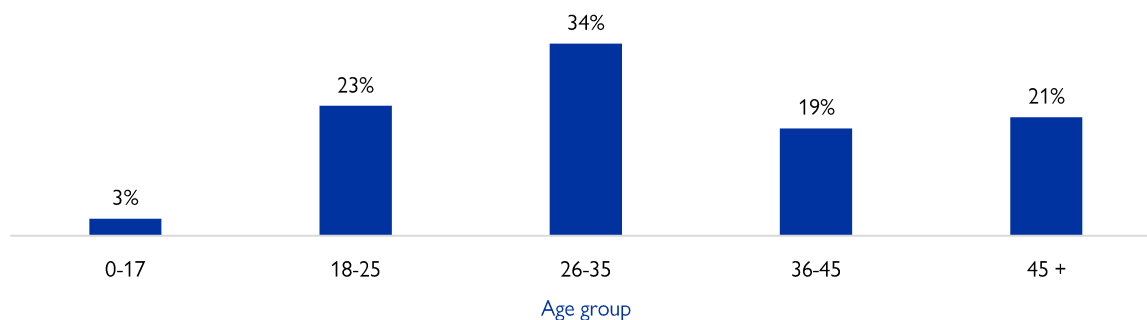


Figure 2: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants by age group

In the 2013 Population and housing census (GBoS, 2013), the propensity to migrate was higher among the youth especially among migrants 15–29 years old (majority being between 20–24 years). According to this report, as the population ages, the intent to migrate diminishes. The fact that the youth constitutes a majority of internal migrants may have an impact on the socio-economic balance of their community of origin. It can be inferred that less workforce would be available to participate in agricultural activities – potentially worsening the agricultural situation.

#### Travelling alone/with family: What is the tendency for migrants to travel alone?

To understand the mindset of a migrant upon departure from their place of origin, this study tried to determine if migrants typically travel alone or with their families. According to the respondents, 80% migrated alone (see Figure 3).

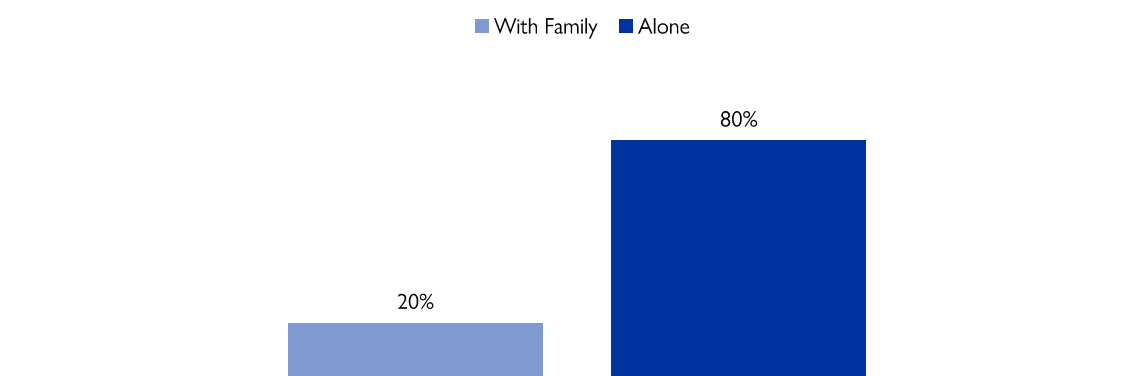


Figure 3: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants travel approach

In rural Gambia, the household sizes are found to be relatively larger than in urban settlements (National Population Commission Secretariat, 2007; GBoS, 2017). These disparities in household size by LGA is evident in the 2013 population and housing census where it was found that the average size of households in Banjul was 4.4 while Basse was 14.9. This large household size may be a reason why a majority of migrants travel alone, as the cost of migrating with one's entire family may be relatively high.

With 34% of migrant respondents being between 26–35 years old, it is also important to note that the highest number of migrants that travelled alone are within this same age group (31%) and in-fact, migrants over the age of 45 are the ones migrating the most with their families (see Figure 4).

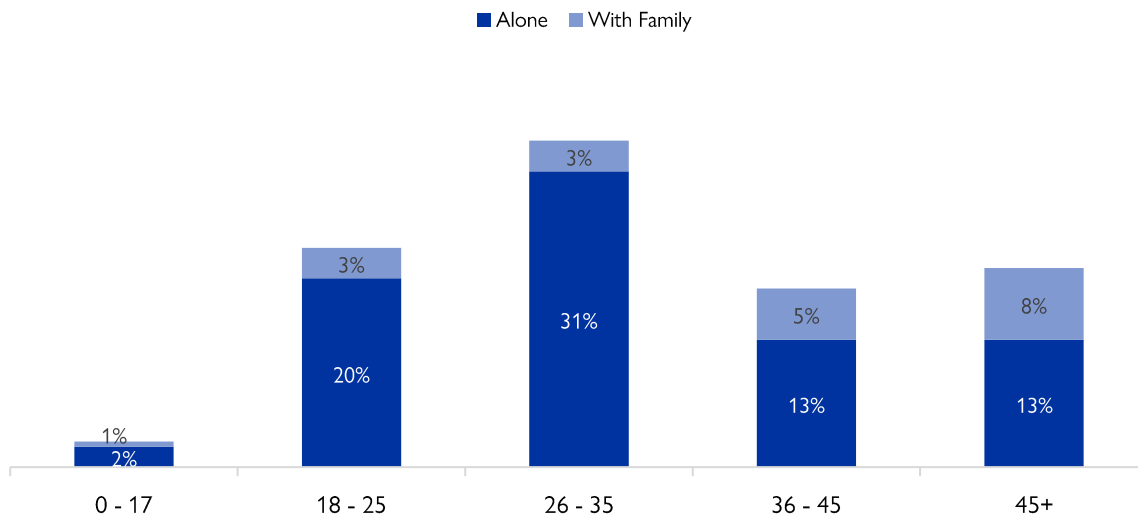


Figure 4: Age group of migrants and their approach to migration

According to Figure 4, the older the age of the migrant the more likely they are to travel with their families – this may reflect the level of responsibility linked to each group and the different objectives of the migration.

#### Gender Profile: who migrates more?

According to Figure 5, there is a higher number of male migrants (69%) than females (31%) among the rural-to-urban migrant respondents<sup>24</sup>. This could be attributed to the fact that migration is sex (and age) selective and as a result more males than females were accessed during the survey (GBoS, 2013).

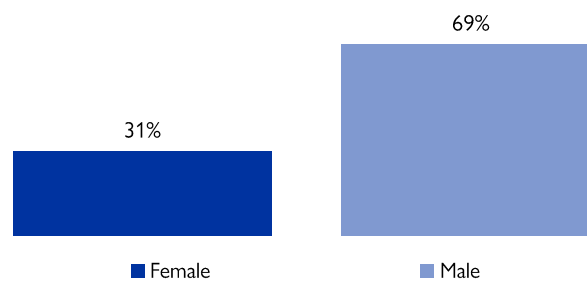


Figure 5: Percentage of respondents by Gender

In a 2018 ActionAid Report, the issue of male/female imbalance in rural areas was raised, as mostly women would remain in rural communities while the men population migrated (GBoS, 2013; Action Aid, 2018). This has an impact on birth rates and limiting the farm hands available (Action Aid, 2018). In The Gambia, men are perceived as the primary income earners and are thus expected to go out to ensure food/household security (National Population Commission Secretariat, 2007) which could also explain the large number of male rural-to-urban migrants.

<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, the *Migration and Urbanisation Survey of 2009* showed that females account for 57% of all internal migrants in the Gambia. Therefore, the 2009 survey results contradict a theory of “male dominance” in migration, as male breadwinners in the Gambia do not migrate more than females. Additionally, the results from IOM research have potentially been biased due to the low number of female participants and the small size of the selected sample which does not allow to give a comprehensive overview of the country population.

The rural areas have more females, 52%, than males (GBoS, 2013), further showing that there are more male migrants. However, in contrast to this finding, additional report shows that female migrants dominate as life-time migrants<sup>25</sup> (GBoS, 2013; MGSOG, 2017) – they make up approximately 54%. It shows that wives and domestic workers typically originate from the rural areas. This conflict in information reveals that there is a rise in the number of female internal migrants (not only the males are migration), however, the motivations for each differ.

*Marital Status: what are the migrants' marital status?*

According to Figure 6, 71% of the rural-to-urban migrant respondents cited that they are married. With 80% of migrants that travelled alone and 71% being married, it shows that even though a majority of migrants are married, they chose to migrate alone.

With a majority of the respondents being male, it can be deduced that as the perceived income earners, they went out in search of better economic opportunities.

Further analysis of the data was done on the 71% of married migrants (who also travelled alone), and the results are presented in Figure 6 and Figure 7. The data shows that majority, 28%, are within the 26–35 age group – this means that majority of migrants within the ages of 26 – 35 are male, migrating alone and are married.

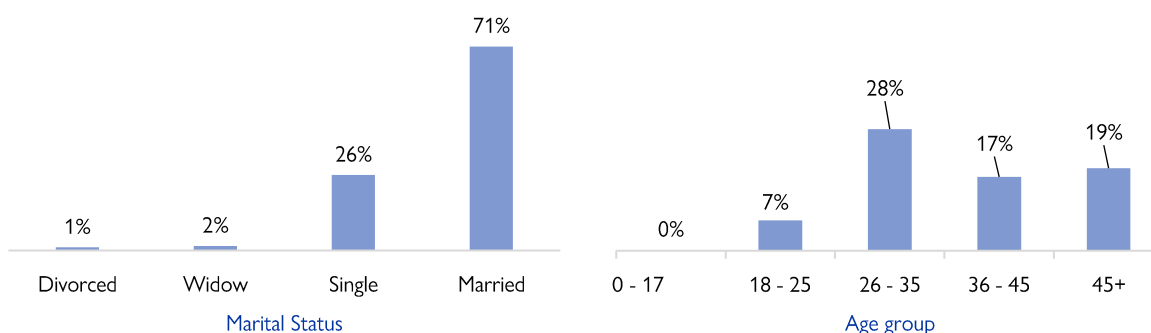


Figure 6: Percentage of rural urban migrants by marital status      Figure 7: Percentage of married migrants by age group

This finding expands on an extract from the National Population Policy that the men, as primary income earners, are expected to ensure food/household security (National Population Commission Secretariat, 2007).

*Educational Attainment<sup>26</sup>: what is the education level of internal migrants?*

There are multiple factors influencing the education system in The Gambia, especially the rural education system: low teaching quality, relevance, retention and mainly, low enrolment (Adekanmbi, Blimpo, & Evans, 2009). Urban communities have registered a gross enrolment rate<sup>27</sup> of 97% while the lowest rate is recorded in the Central River Region with 69% (UNICEF, 2019; Hall, 2018).

With the focus being on rural-to-urban migration, rural communities have revealed lower rates of completing basic education and a higher number of school drop-outs in comparison to urban communities.

<sup>25</sup> A lifetime migrant is a person whose current resident is different from his/her place of birth. This includes migration within the same LGA. This figure shows the distribution of life–time migrants 10 years and older (GBoS, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> In this report, educational attainment refers to formal method of education.

<sup>27</sup> In the Gambia, the education system consists of “six years of primary (lower basic) and three years of upper basic education”.

According to this study, rural-to-urban migrants have a high record of no educational attainment (49%) and 30% with a secondary education as indicated in Figure 8. This result has also been corroborated by the migration report citing that majority of internal migrants have no formal education (IOM, 2017).

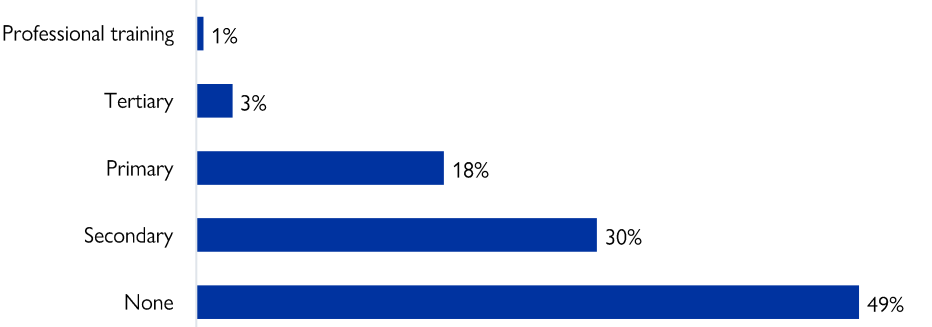


Figure 8: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants by educational attainment

The underdevelopment of the education system and the relatively low enrolment level is perceived to have an impact on the youth regarding access to job opportunities. The Government of The Gambia has made it a priority area in The Gambia’s National Development Plan 2018–2021: “Poor and inadequate education continues to limit the youth’s productivity and the acquisition of skills. Meanwhile, insufficient access to knowledge and information (including business development services for the entrepreneurial youth) is hindering their gainful engagement.” This is an important area because with the rural-to-urban drift, these migrants will find it more difficult to find jobs in the formal sector.

There has been an encouraging trend in the enrolment of girls into lower basic education from 2010, growing at an annual rate of 5.5% compared to that of boys which is 4.9% (MoBSE, 2016).

It is important to assess if the same trend is noticeable among the rural female migrants during the survey. According to Figure 9, 54% of females have no formal education and none had professional training, thus the male respondents record the highest proportion in almost all education categories<sup>28</sup>.

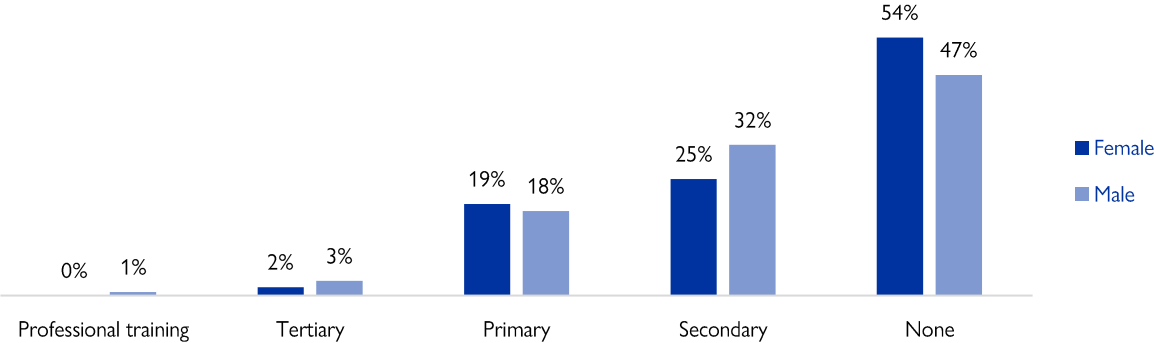


Figure 9: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants by education level and gender

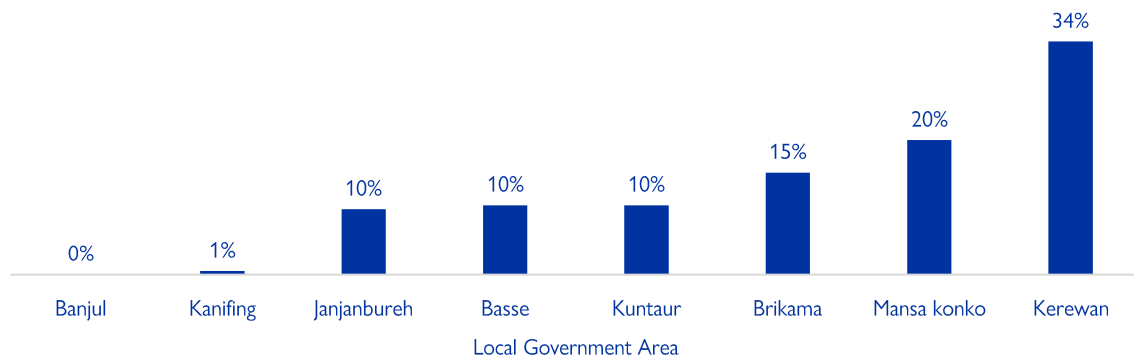
<sup>28</sup> With 80% of migrant respondents being male, this analysis is thus not a representation of the level of education among females in rural areas.



*Places of Origin: where are Gambian rural to urban migrants coming from?*

According to The Gambia migration profile, internal migrants tend to migrate to Kanifing, Brikama, and Kerewan (IOM, 2017; GBoS, 2013) with a significant proportion of them originating from Kerewan (21%), Kanifing (18%), Brikama (12%), and a smaller number from Kuntaur LGA.

Findings from Figure 10 show that majority of migrants originate from Kerewan at 34%; other LGA's also have a record number of migrants: 20% of migrants originate from Mansakonko, 15% from Brikama, 10% from Basse, and 10% from Kuntaur.



*Figure 10: LGA of origin for rural-to-urban migrant respondents*

Kerewan LGA, predominantly rural area, is located on the northern part of The Gambia approximately 60 km away from Banjul, the capital city. It has a population of 220,080 as per the 2013 Population and Housing Census (GBoS, 2013) with the community known for its agricultural activity. Farming activities in The Gambia deeply depend on the rainy seasons and during off season, the women engage in vegetable production (Revolvy, 2019; KUSA, 2019). This could also explain why the majority of the internal migrants are male instead of female – because the females are engaged, during and after, the rainy season in agricultural activities.

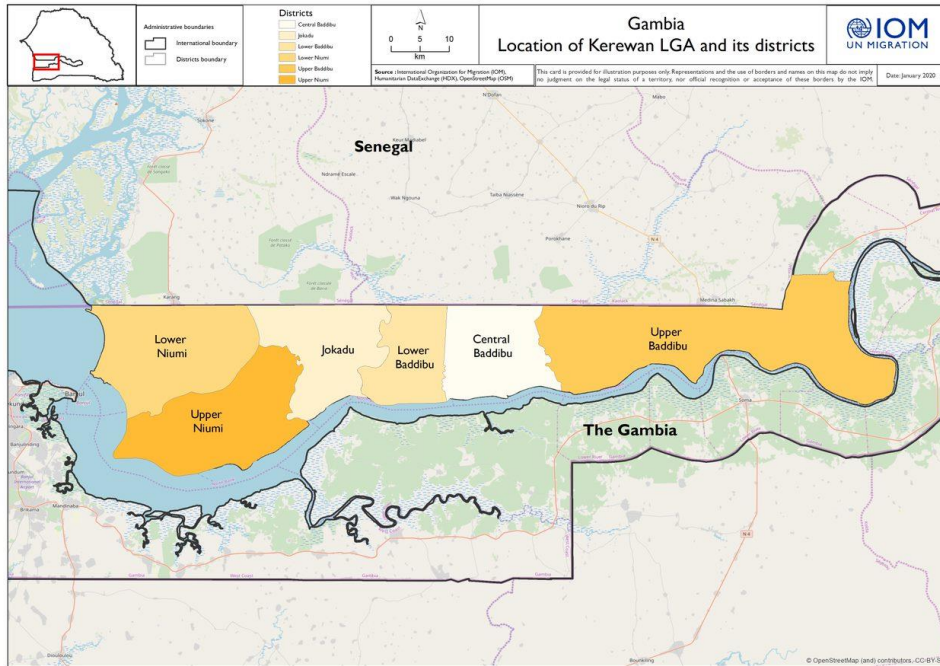


Figure 11: Map of Kerewan LGA and its districts (Rarelibra, 2006)

Most of the settlements in Kerewan LGA are rural and usually characterised by decreasing crop production, and environmental degradation. The Action Aid Report “Back Way to Europe” stated that recent years have seen a decline of crop production by 40% (Action Aid, 2018).

Migration from highly rural LGAs has been quite significant, however, the trend has been declining; this could be attributed to the rise in the cost of migrating from hinterland to the most urbanised LGAs of Kanifing and Brikama (GBoS, 2013).

#### *Places of Destination: where are Gambian rural-to-urban migrants travelling to?*

With the assumption that internal migrants tend to move towards urban communities, it is also important to trace the LGAs of destination for these migrants. Currently, the Brikama LGA has a record of the highest population growth rate at 5.7% per annum between 2003–2013 (GBoS, 2013; GBoS, 2013) and including Kanifing LGA, they have the highest number of internal and international migrant record. The Brikama and Kanifing LGAs receive the highest number of migrants but sends out less internal migrants – this will subsequently affect the population and lead to decentralisation (GBoS, 2013).

In Table 3, the following details were observed.

- Internal migrants **in Basse LGA** mainly originate from Basse LGA – 5% – and **Kerewan LGA** – 5%;
- Migrants **in Brikama LGA** mainly originate from Mansakonko LGA – 18% – and **Kerewan LGA** – **16%**;
- Migrants **in Kerewan LGA** include migrants rotating between communities within the Kerewan LGA – 13% and to Kuntaur LGA – 8%.
- 18% of migrants in Brikama are from Mansakonko LGA

It is observed that out of all the four LGAs of destinations mentioned in Table 3, Basse, Brikama and Kerewan LGA's all have a record of migrants originating from Kerewan.

Table 3: LGA of origin and destination

LGAs of Origin	LGAs of Destination			
	Basse	Brikama	Kanifing	Kerewan
Basse	5%	4%	1%	1%
Brikama	4%	6%	1%	4%
Janjanbureh	0%	5%	0%	4%
Kanifing	1%	0%	0%	0%
Kerewan	5%	16%	0%	13%
Kuntaur	1%	2%	0%	8%
Mansakonko	0%	18%	0%	2%

*Employment Status: Do rural-to-urban migrants have access to job opportunities/ are they currently employed?*

This section analyses the occupational status of rural-to-urban migrants. The findings of the survey show that 48% of migrants are self-employed. Eleven percent of the migrants reported to be unemployed and not looking for a job – unemployed (non-job seekers)– and 33% were reported to be employed (see Figure 12).

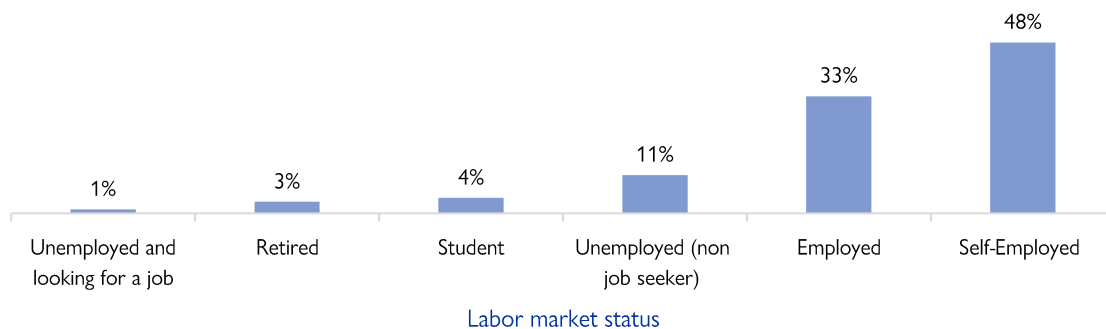


Figure 12: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants by Employment Status

Presented in Figure 13 is the labour market status of the rural-to-urban migrants by gender. It is observed that all the unemployed rural urban migrants not looking for a job are females (35%). More males were reported to be employed (42%) and self-employed (50%).

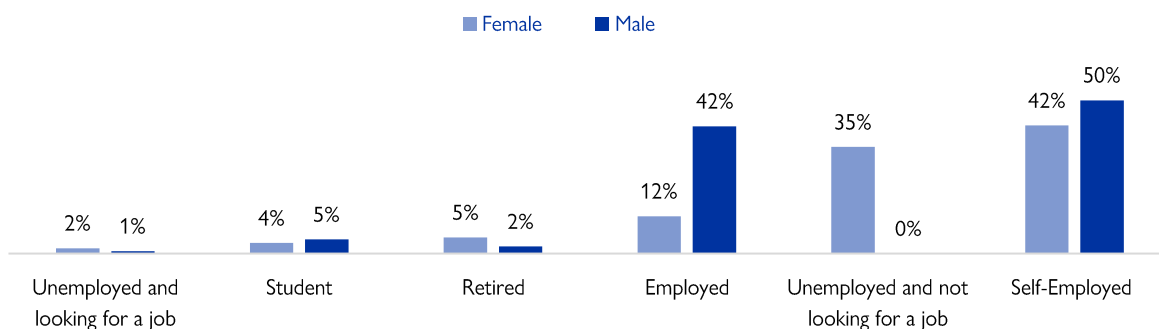


Figure 13: Employment status of migrants by gender

Of the 35% unemployed females that are not looking for a job, 80% are married and 10%, each, are single or widowed (See Figure 14).

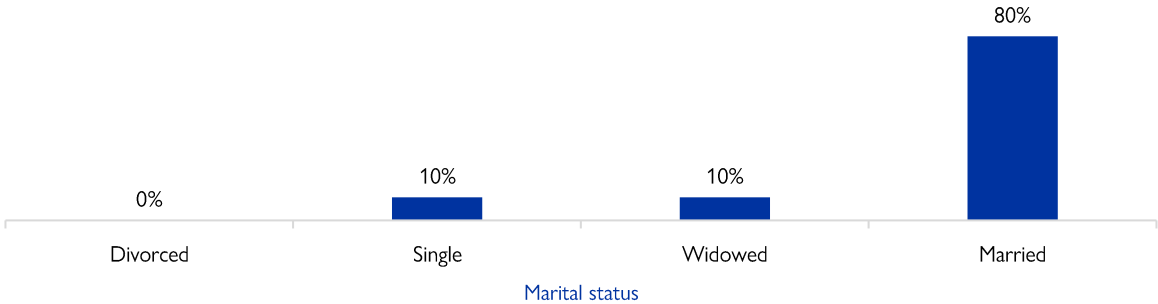


Figure 14: Marital status of unemployed female migrants

Figure 12 shows that the majority of respondents are self-employed (48%). The reason could be attributed to the fact that most migrants prefer to be self-employed. This was further revealed during the focus group discussion as the majority of the participants reported that they preferred to be self-employed (and only one participant preferred to have both employment options).

Figure 15. The highest number of respondents are employed in the business/wholesale sector (19%), followed by construction (12%), transportation (9%), agriculture (9%) and Security/Fire (9%).

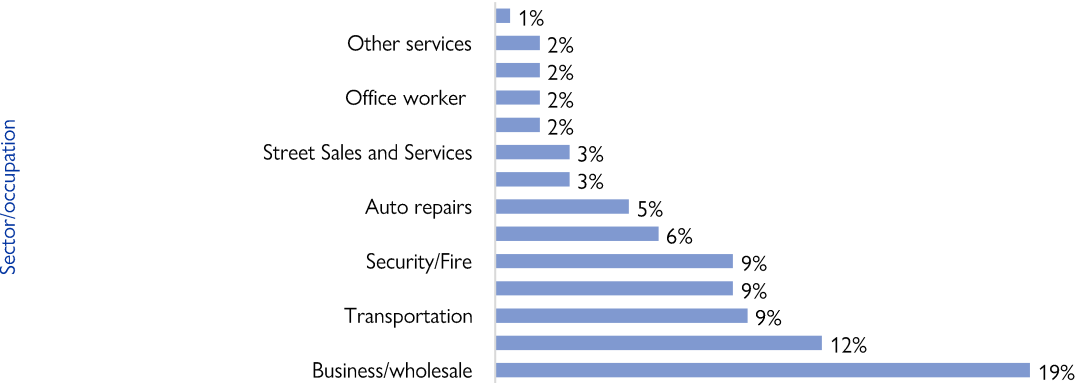


Figure 15: Employment sectors/occupation of Rural-to-urban migrants

According to the key informants<sup>29</sup>, business/wholesale and petty trading is also a major employment sector/occupation for migrants in their communities. In Figure 16, 30% of key informants cited that the business industry is a common form of employment in their communities while 40% cited petty trading<sup>30</sup> as the main occupation in their communities.

This has shown that the business or trading sector seems to be most appealing for migrants which is interesting because agriculture is a major pillar of The Gambia’s economy (MGSOG, 2017).

<sup>29</sup> The key informant interviews were conducted in selected communities. Refer to methodology section.

<sup>30</sup> “Petty trading” from the focus group discussion means, a worker in the informal business market.

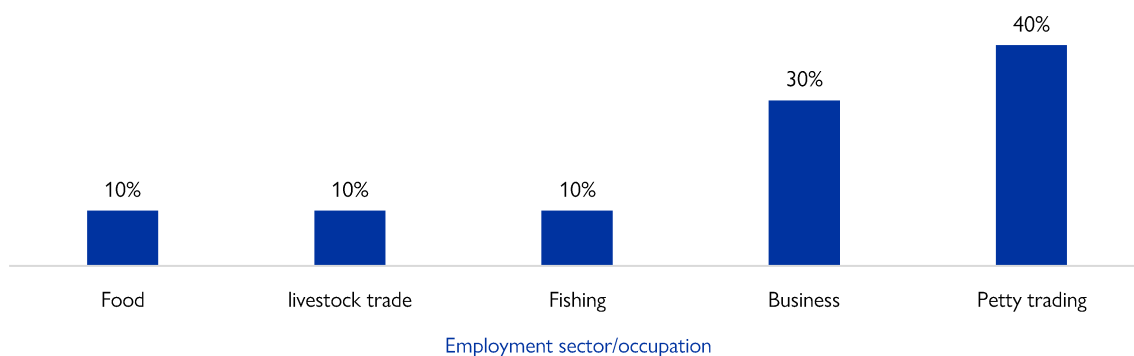


Figure 16: Main area of employment/occupation in KI communities

## 1.2 A RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRATION TREND EXISTING OVER THE YEARS

Presented in this section is the migrants' journey into urban communities over the years. It also discusses the tendency for internal migrants to move between multiple communities during their journey.

### *Movement of migrants before 2018*

The perspective of the key informants has been vital in determining the rural-to-urban migrant flows into urban communities over the years. According to the figures shared during the KI interviews, there are currently approximately 33,000 individuals who migrated from rural to urban areas living in the 10 communities surveyed (see Figure 17).

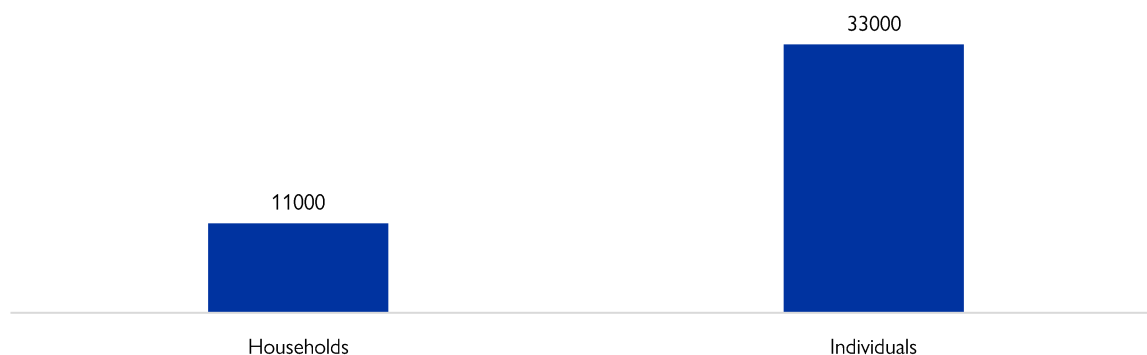


Figure 17: Number of migrants and households migrating into urban communities before 2018

With 80% of the rural-to-urban migrants travelling alone, the low member/household ratio isn't surprising.

To further analyse the data provided by the Key Informants, the rural-to-urban migrants were also interviewed to determine the departure dates from their place of origin, and the results are presented in Figure 18. The data shows that there has been a steady increase in the number of migrants departing from their place of origin with a peak in the last ten years (38% departed between 2010 and 2018)

Figure 18 shows that 28% of rural-to-urban migrants travelled between 2000–2009 in comparison to 17% in 1990–1999 – showing a steady increase in the migration trend over the years, a trend likely to increase.

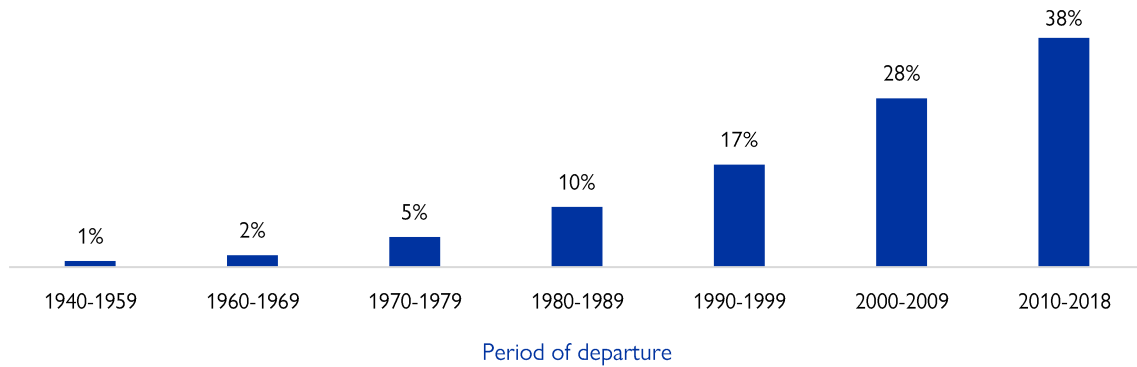


Figure 18: Period of departure from place of origin<sup>31</sup>

It is also important to understand the migratory route of internal migrants by determining the location(s) they travelled to during their journey. According to the rural-to-urban migrants, 75% chose to migrate directly to their current communities instead of diverting to multiple locations.



Figure 19: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants that travelled directly to their current community.

Interestingly, during the focus group discussion with rural-to-urban migrants in Soma, Farafenni and Tanji, participants were asked how they decided on the community to migrate to and phrases such as ‘language spoken’ were mentioned by a majority of respondents. It can be inferred that migrants moved directly to communities where they were able to easily integrate and communicate effectively. It can also be inferred that a majority of migrants departed from their place of origin with a specific community in mind – this explains why only 25% moved between multiple communities.

*“To decide where to go, we checked the languages spoken in the community we intend to go, to make it easier for us to integrate “*

**Focus group discussion with rural-urban migrants in Farafenni community, Kerewan LGA**

<sup>31</sup> During the interview, respondents (rural-to-urban migrants) in targeted communities provided the departure date from their place of origin. This information was aggregated by year to determine the number of migrants that travelled within a specific year (and date range). It is not fully representative of rural-urban trends within the Gambia in general but does give more clarity on the phenomenon for selected researched localities.

### 1.3 LIMITED MIGRATION TRENDS TO TRANSIT COMMUNITIES

As per an objective of this study, it is important to determine the migratory route of internal migrants –if migrants moved multiple times (or not), the reason for the move, and if their dissatisfaction is a determinant for further relocation to other communities or countries. Firstly, in Figure 19, 75% of respondents did not move to a transit community but rather travelled directly to their current locality. The following analysis will delve further into the 25% that migrated to a transit community.

In Figure 20 below, the 25% of respondents that travelled to a transit community mainly settled in Kanifing (39%), Brikama (26%), and Mansakonko LGAs (15%) – making these the main LGAs of settlement for internal migrants.

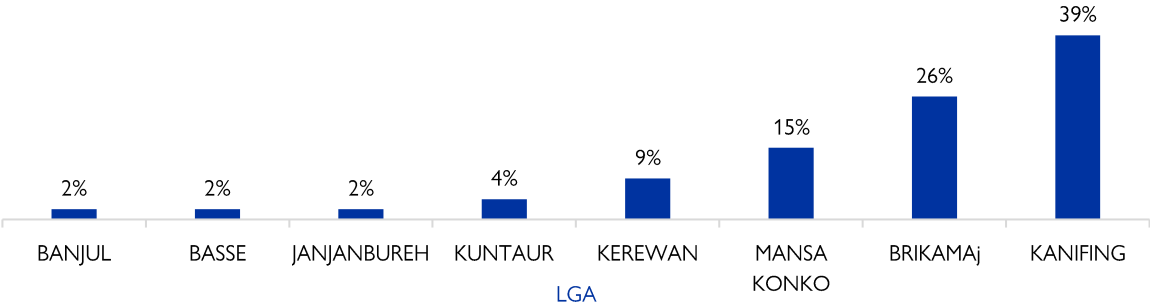


Figure 20 Percentage of rural urban migrants by LGA of transit

Key informants provided information on the number of individuals and household migrants that have transited to their regions and according to the estimated figures in Figure 21, Brikama (65%), Kerewan (21%), and Kanifing (8%) have the highest individual migrant population.

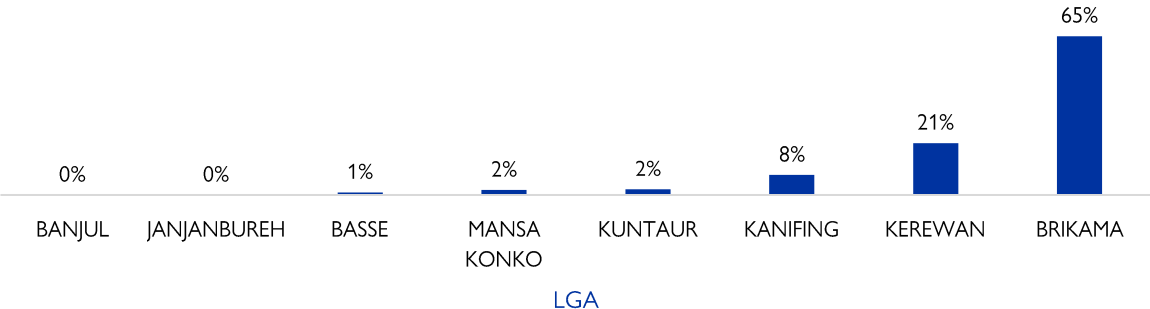


Figure 21 Percentage of individual migrants in KI communities

Information from the key informants further puts light on Brikama and Kanifing LGAs as main LGAs of destination.

### Achievement of migrants' goal/aspiration in the transit community

*"We believe that we could be successful in this community as we do have jobs here. However, a challenge is that our income is low, and it isn't enough to sustain our families because as family heads we tend to stay with and accommodate extended family."*

#### Focus group discussions with rural-to-urban migrants in the community of Tanji, Brikama LGA.

The migrants moved into these transit communities driven by a motivating factor. This section captures the reasons for migrating and if these reasons were achieved during their stay. With the migrants eventually continuing their journey to other locations, this analysis will help in understanding how long they stayed in the transit community to achieve (or not) their goal(s).

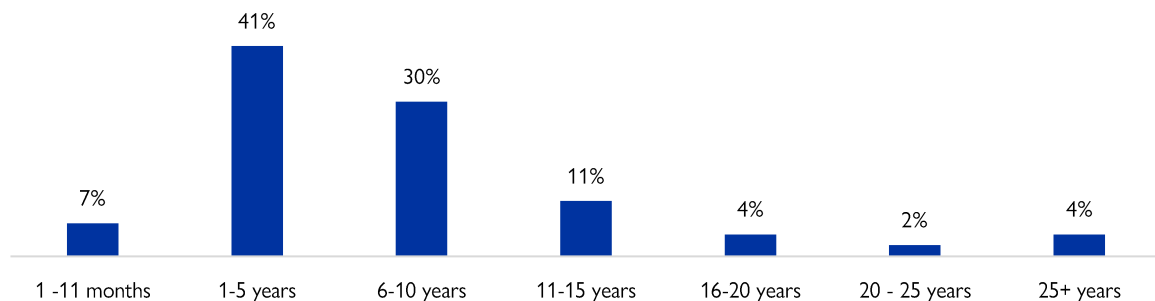


Figure 22: Duration of stay in transit community (rural-to-urban migrants)

During the survey, the rural-to-urban migrants indicated the period of arrival and departure from these transit communities. This data was used to determine the duration of stay in these communities before migrating to their current locality. In Figure 22 above, it is evident that the duration of stay in these transit communities varies. Forty-one percent of rural-to-urban migrant respondents stayed in these communities between 1–5 years before further travelling internally, while only 7% of respondents stayed in the community for less than a year. This shows that these communities were not a temporary location as perceived.

When asked why they departed from the transit community after staying for long duration, Figure 23 shows that 41% of rural-to-urban migrants departed mainly due to the lack of economic opportunities available in the transit communities, while 24% departed because they had a job transfer/posting to another community. It can then be deduced that the majority of respondents did not achieve their goals in the transit community they settled into, which led them to move to another community, even after 1–5 years (and more) of residence.



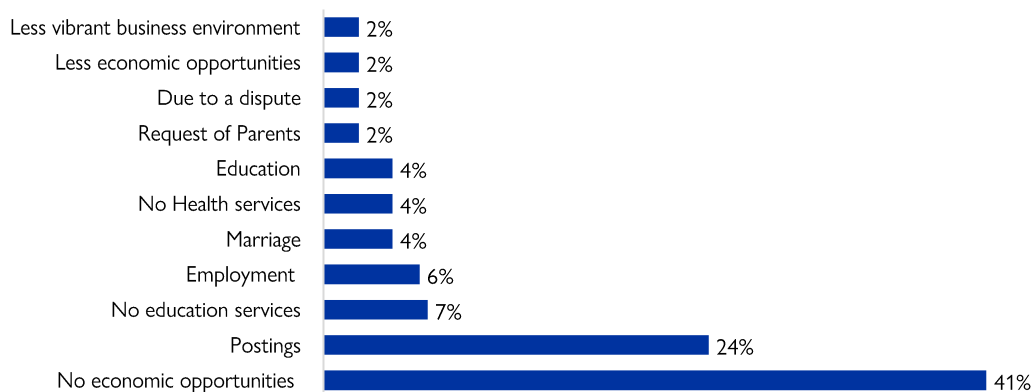


Figure 23 Reasons for rural-to-urban migrants to depart from transit community

#### 1.4. DIFFERENT JOURNEYS BUT SIMILAR EXPERIENCES BETWEEN AVRR BENEFICIARIES AND RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRANTS

Presented in this section is the result of interviews conducted with individual beneficiaries of IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme. The similarities and/or differences between the journeys of the rural-to-urban migrants and the AVRR beneficiaries are analysed to determine any visible trends.

##### *Educational attainment: AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants*

A 2018 survey revealed that the higher a person's educational level, the higher their desire to travel abroad (Hall, 2018). Different from the rural-to-urban migrants, the AVRR respondents have a higher number of travellers with secondary education – 50%, see Figure 24. This shows that the respondents that travelled to countries outside The Gambia are more educated than the internal migrants. A similar notion was cited in an IOM Community assessment report – it revealed that the more educated an individual is, the more likely they are to aspire to leave The Gambia (Hall, 2018; IOM, 2018).

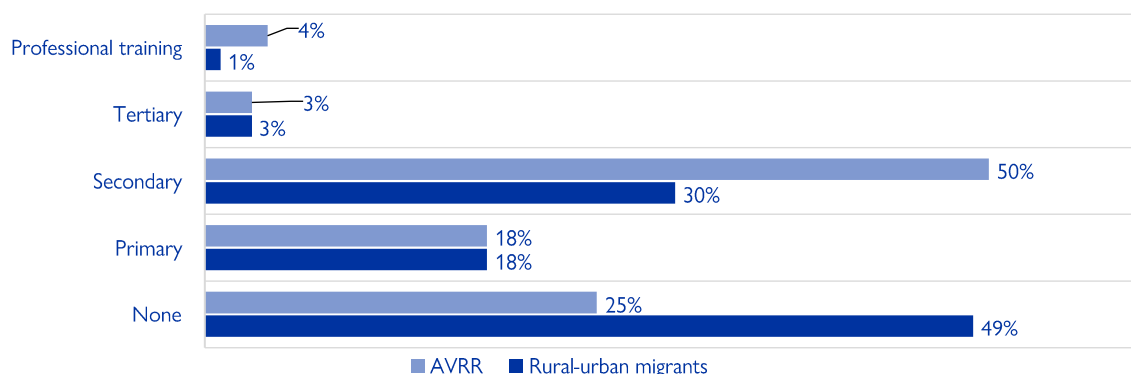


Figure 24: Percentage of AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants by educational attainment

The community assessment report also tried to establish a connection between the level of education and the desire to migrate abroad, and as indicated in Figure 25, it is evident that the higher an individual is educated, the

higher the desire to migrate – this chart reveals that 83% of Bachelor Degree holders have the desire to travel abroad (Hall, 2018).

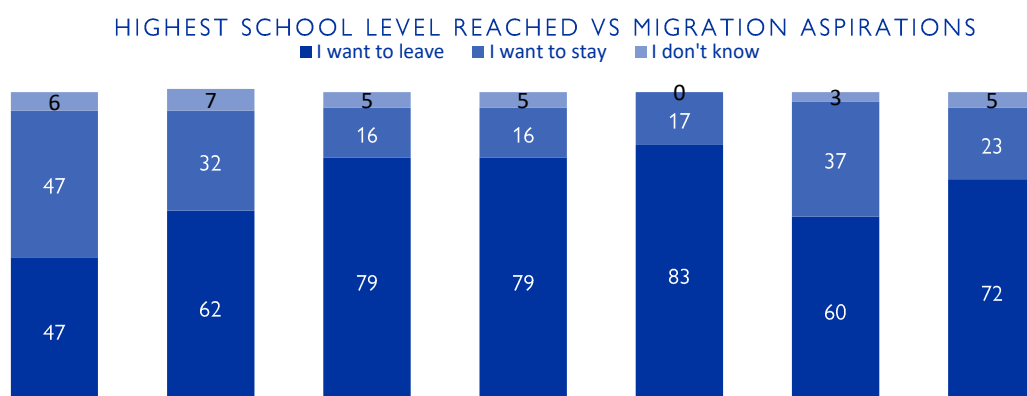


Figure 25: Highest educational level vs. migration aspiration (Hall, 2018)

The report also mentioned that the intention and ability of migrants to travel may also be dependent on the educational level. Migrants with access to information channels can utilise this information to facilitate their migration journey. Similar findings were made in the Youth and Mobility Report (IOM, 2019). This report found that migrants travelling within the West and Central Africa Region have a lower education level in comparison to migrants headed to North Africa or Europe.

#### Place of origin: AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants

As indicated in Figure 26, the majority of AVRR respondents originate from Brikama (31%), Kanifing (22%), Kerewan (15%), Basse (12%) and Janjanbureh LGA (8%), whereas, rural-to-urban migrant respondents mainly originate from the Kerewan (34%); Mansakonko (20%), Brikama (15%), Basse (10%) and Kuntaur LGAs (10%). This means that the **main LGAs of origin for both rural-to-urban migrants and AVRR respondents are Brikama, Kerewan, and Basse**. In Figure 26, the data on AVRR respondents' shows that Brikama has the highest proportion of outbound migration – meaning that, it has the highest number of migrants departing, followed by Kanifing. The population in Brikama accounts for 37.2% of the total population in 2013. Kanifing LGA stands for 20.3% of the total population in the Gambia<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> GBoS (2013). 2013 Population and housing census: national migration analysis. Banjul: Gambia Bureau of Statistics.

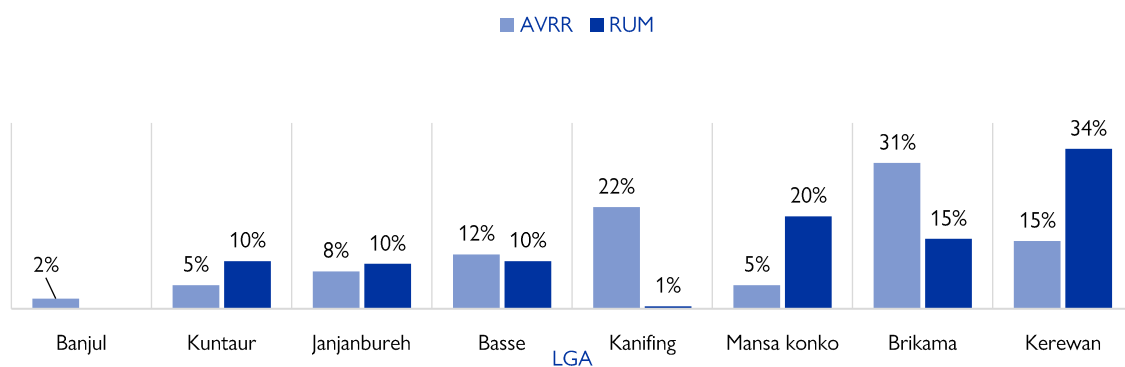


Figure 26: Percentage of AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants by LGA of origin

#### Age difference: AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants

As shown in Figure 27, the highest proportion of respondents are mainly in the 26–35 age group in both surveys (AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants). Assisted voluntary return and reintegration respondents accounted for 47% of the age group, while rural-to-urban migrants accounted for 34% of the same age groups.

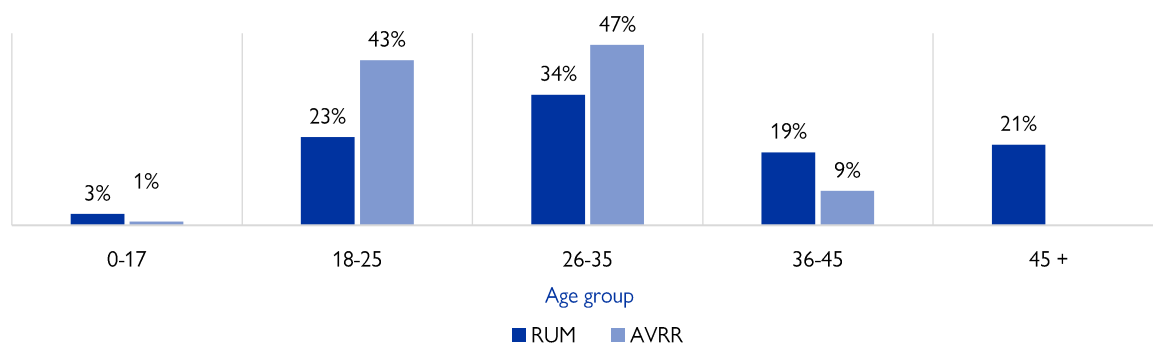


Figure 27: Percentage of AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants by age group

The Gambia has a very young population with approximately 65% below 25 years (IOM, 2017); this could be attributed why there are more migrants less than 40 years of age.

#### Highest period of departure from place of origin

Similar to the internal migrants, there was a sudden spike of movement from the AVRR respondents' place of origin; evidently, migration in the year 2000s, from both the AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants, was high. According to Figure 28, 88% of AVRR respondents migrated around the 2000s (13% in 2000–2009 and 75% in 2010–2019).

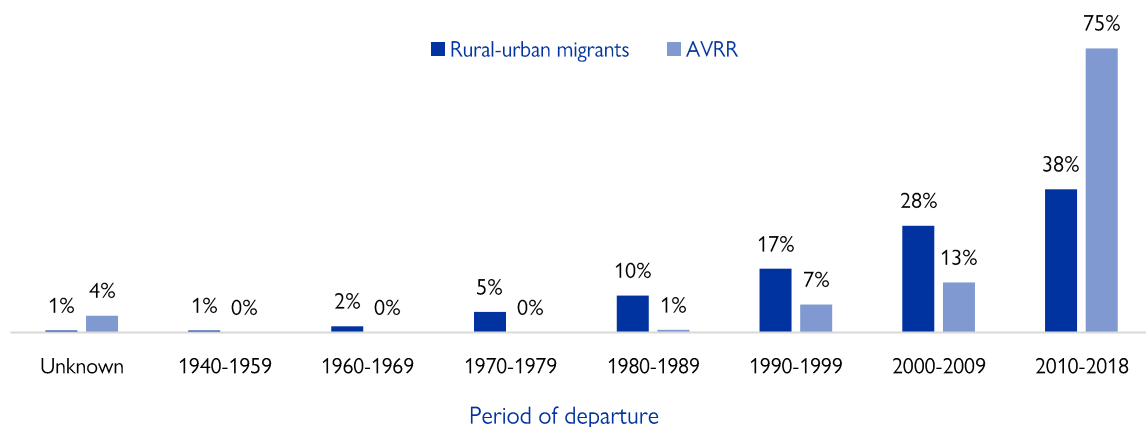


Figure 28: Period of departure from place of origin by AVRR and Rural-to-urban migrants<sup>33</sup>

This shows a drastic rise in travellers during the 2000's. Although no explanation was given for this spontaneous increase in migration, it could be attributed to irregular rainfall pattern which culminated to crop failure in rural communities (UNCT, 2016). For example, in 2011, regions experienced heavy flooding thus causing severe damage to crop yields and temporarily displacement. The poverty level in the rural areas is also high mainly due to the population's high reliance on rain-fed agriculture. (UNCT, 2016). Additionally, the 2011/2012 Sahel drought crisis along with late and erratic rain during the planting season of 2014/2015 are all factors that may explain the sudden move of migrants in the 2000s (especially 2010–2019). Among AVRR, 2010 - 2018 also corresponds to a period of high departures to Libya and Europe, especially since 2015, as in 2017 more than 8498<sup>34</sup> Gambian nationals arrived in Europe, especially in Greece, Italy and Spain.

Upon departing from their place of origin, 64% of AVRR respondents emigrated directly while 36% relocated to a transit community. Interestingly, the AVRR respondents migrated to similar communities as the rural-to-urban migrants. The rural-to-urban migrants migrated to Kanifing, Brikama and Mansakonko LGAs and as shown in Figure 29, AVRR respondents migrated mainly to Brikama and Kanifing also.

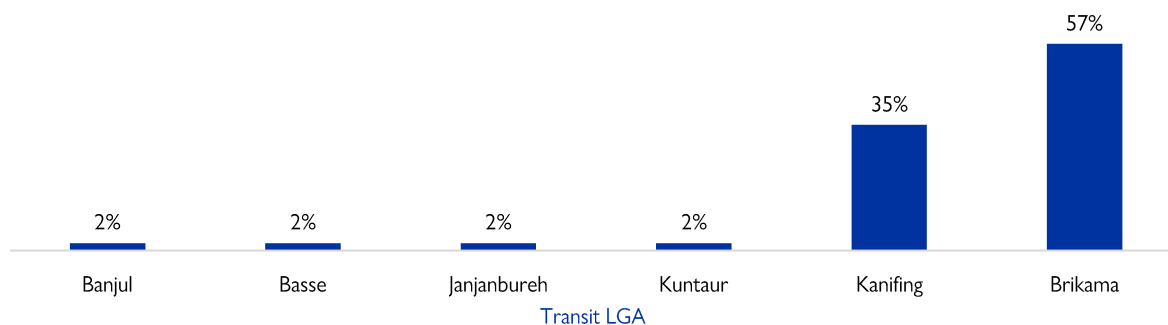


Figure 29: Percentage of AVRR by LGA of transit (before international movement)

<sup>33</sup> During the interview, respondents (rural-urban migrants) in targeted communities provided the departure date from their place of origin. This information was aggregated by year to determine the number of migrants that travelled within a specific year (and date range). It is not fully representative of rural-urban trends within the Gambia in general but does give more clarity on the phenomenon for selected researched localities.

<sup>34</sup> IOM flow monitoring data, 2017.

Based on these responses, there is quite a movement into Brikama and Kanifing LGAs. These LGAs can be cited as main transit communities for both rural-to-urban migrants and AVRR respondents, making it the most common LGAs for internal and international migrants.

However, as previously mentioned, only 36% of AVRR respondents migrated to a transit community – this is a small proportion compared to the number of AVRR beneficiaries that travel abroad. **This disproves the hypothesis that majority of AVRR beneficiaries tend to migrate internally prior to emigrating in order to garner funds for their journey.**

## DISCUSSION

- According to the research findings, there is no clear link between rural-to-urban migration and international migration towards Europe in the Gambia in the case of AVRR beneficiaries considered in the scope of this study. The AVRR profile seems different from the rural-to-urban migrant's profile, as the AVRR respondents have a higher number of travellers with secondary education (50%), whereas 49% of rural-to-urban migrants did receive formal education. However, there are similarities between the AVRR beneficiaries and rural-to-urban migrants as a majority of the migrating population are between the age of 18 – 35 years showing that even though both groups migrated, the mobility trends and characteristics differ.
- Besides, migration patterns of AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants also appear to be rather different, as only a small proportion (36%) of AVRR beneficiaries tend to migrate internally prior to migrating abroad, 64% chose to migrate directly internationally.
- Although data is scarce to accurately measure the scope of internal mobility, information given by the Key Informants in the 10 communities assessed tends to prove that rural-to-urban migration is a common and ongoing trend for each urban locality, and have increased over the years, with a clear peak in the last ten years (2010 – 2018). This may be explained by the growing effects of climate change on agriculture production and the lack of employment opportunities. Among AVRR, this period also corresponds to a period of high departures to Europe and Libya.
- According to the 2013 Population and Housing Census (GBoS, 2013), 140,761 migrants engaged in rural-to-urban migration, with the majority travelling to either Kanifing or Brikama. With the infrastructural development and the emergence of housing estates particularly in Brikama LGA, they represent a constant source of settlement for migrants (GBoS, 2013).
- The majority of rural-to-urban migrants relocating to Kanifing and Brikama are from Mansakonko (26%) and Kerewan (30%).
- Another noticeable trend is migration occurring within the same LGA (7% of respondents moved within Brikama LGA). According to the 2013 census, 86,861 migrants moved from one urban LGA to another and this causes the rapid development of those LGAs because both rural and urban migrants are relocating there (GBoS, 2013; MGSOG, 2017). It is also indicated in the report that the majority of urban-urban migration occurs within Brikama and Kanifing LGAs.

## 2. DETERMINING THE LONG-TERM SETTLEMENT STRATEGY OF MIGRANTS IN URBAN COMMUNITIES: THE SEARCH FOR NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

This section presents the main reasons behind migrants relocating to urban communities, the level of integration into these communities and their future migration plans.

Agriculture has been a dominant sector in rural communities, mainly depending on conducive weather conditions. However, due to unreliable and unpredictable conditions such as natural disasters, erosion, poor rainfall, more people are migrating to urban communities in search of better economic opportunities. (MGSoG, 2017; National Population Commission Secretariat, 2007). This is one of the motivating factors for the movement of internal migrants.

### 2.1 MAIN DRIVERS AND DETERMINANTS FOR RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRATION: WHY ARE GAMBIANS MIGRATING?

*“We will not migrate to another community if we have a sustainable income from agriculture (getting high produce yield to be able to sell some and use the balance for feeding) and most importantly, access to social services in our community or a community nearby.”*

*“I migrated due to family disputes, but life is very difficult for me here. I am planning to further migrate internally to another community where I can have a more sustainable income through agriculture, preferably in farming.”*

**Focus group discussions with rural-to-urban migrants in the community of Soma, Mansakonko LGA**

Upon determining the LGAs that migrants relocate to, it is important to understand why they departed from their place of origin. The rural-to-urban migrants moved from their place of origin/birth to a different location for various reasons as specified in Figure 30.

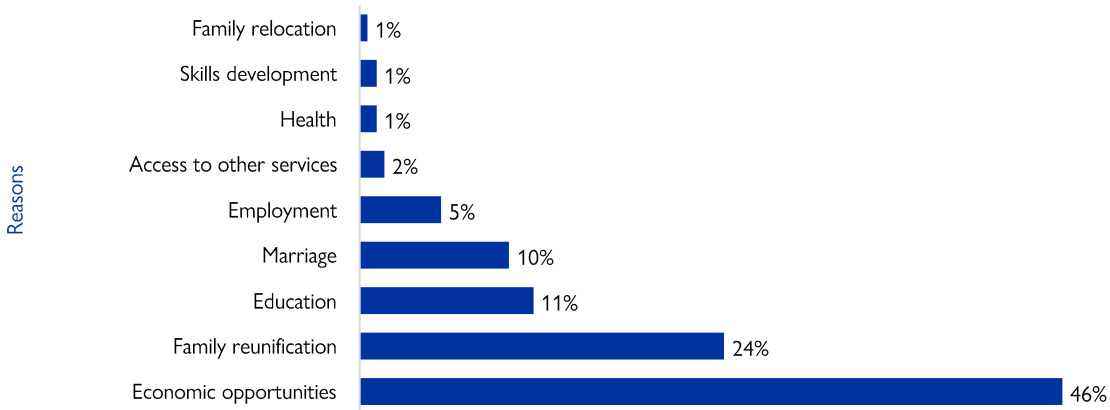


Figure 30: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants by their reasons to migrate

In Figure 30 above, 46% of respondents relocated to pursue better economic opportunities, while others moved for family reunification (24%) and education (11%). This is in line with the reasons cited in the National Migration Profile (MGSOG, 2017).

The results from this pilot research can easily be interlinked with the interviews conducted by Action Aid in various rural areas in The Gambia. In this report, the lack of “good livelihoods in farming” and the “lack of job opportunities” for the youth stand as the main drivers behind migration from rural communities (Action Aid, 2018).

Considering that the majority of female respondents are married, it will also be important to determine their reason(s) for migrating. As shown in previous sections, majority of female respondents are married and not searching for a job.

According to Figure 31, the most common factors for female migrants to relocate is family reunification (46%) and marriage (30%). The 2013 Population and Housing Census shows that females constitute 50.6% of rural-to-urban migrants and this is likely made up of females travelling to join their husband in the urban settlements (GBoS, 2013).

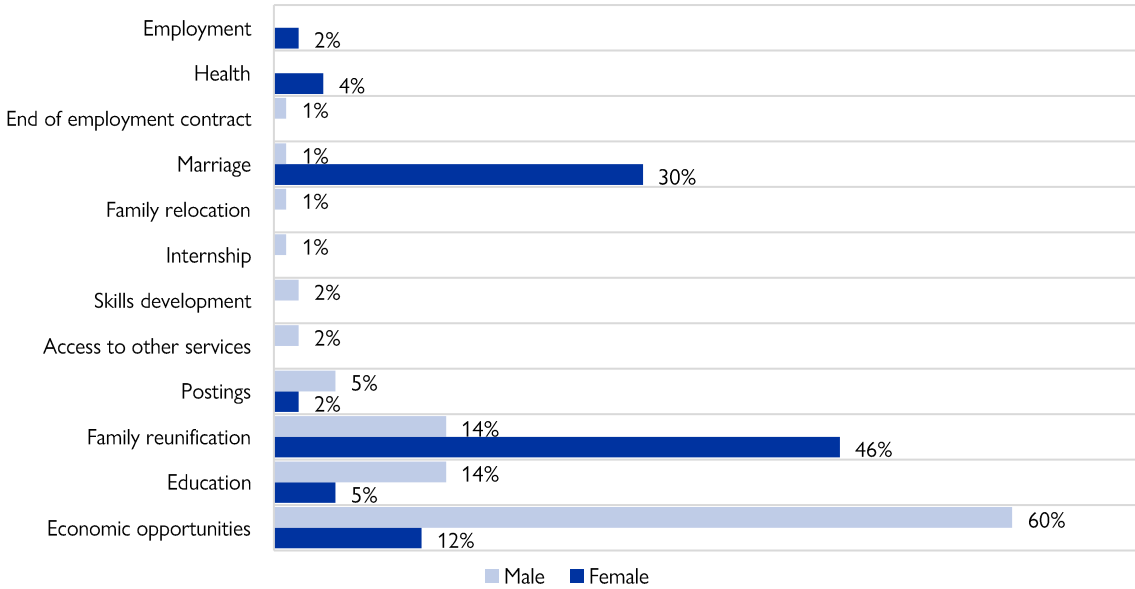


Figure 31: Rural-to-urban migrants’ reasons to migrate by Gender

Figure 31 shows that only 12% of female migrants cited economic opportunity as a reason for migrating – in Section “1. THE PROFILE AND JOURNEY OF MIGRANTS INTO URBAN COMMUNITIES on “Occupation”, this low number of female economic migrants may explain why there is a high number of female respondents unemployed and uninterested in a job search because, clearly, they did not travel in search of economic stability.

During the focus group discussion, all participants reported similar responses as the reason(s) for migrating: family reunification and seeking economic opportunities. However, one participant mentioned that they relocated to Brikama LGA because of its “high standard of living.”

*“Most of us migrated here for better jobs, better pay and a convenient life with access to basic services and necessities like clean water, electricity, good hospitals and schools, and hence if we have all that in our places of origin then we wouldn’t have migrated.”*

*“We decided to migrate to Tanji because it is more economical i.e., feeding and renting are cheaper here and you can easily have access to land with a cheaper price.”*

**Focus group discussions with rural-to-urban migrants in the community of Tanji, Brikama LGA.**

*“We migrated to look for opportunities that are not available in our communities. Others migrate because they decided to reunite with their spouse at their place of work.”*

**Focus group discussions with rural-to-urban migrants in the community of Soma, Mansakonko LGA**

This indicates that the most common reason for internal migrants is to search for better economic opportunities and family reunification. It also reveals that the main motivation for the female migrants is family reunification and marriage.

**The motivation for AVRR respondents to travel is similar to that of the rural-to-urban migrants**

With the AVRR respondents, their reason for migrating can be viewed in two-fold: migrating internally and abroad. Forty-one percent of AVRR respondents cited pursuit of economic opportunities as the main motivation for their relocation. This meant they went into their community of transit with that goal. Other reasons include family reunification (16%) and education (12%).

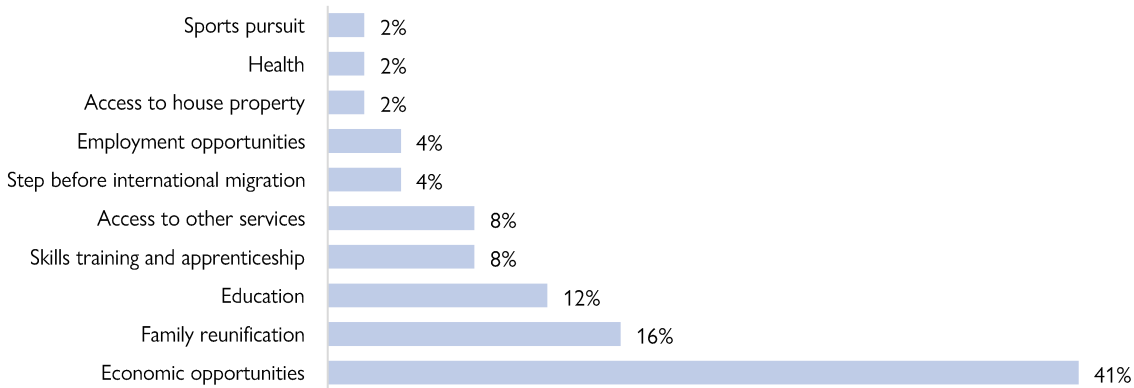


Figure 32: AVRR reasons for migrating internally

It can then be deduced that internal migration is mainly stirred by the search for better economic opportunities, family reunification, and education (and marriage for the females).



## 2.2 MIGRANTS' SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN URBAN COMMUNITIES IS OFTEN A SUCCESS

*“Some of us have a family and compound that we own here. We are doing our best for the family although we still cannot give them most of what they need. We do not believe that our families can have a better place than here. “*

**Focus group discussions with rural-to-urban migrants in the community of Soma, Mansakonko LGA**

This section discusses how internal migrants have integrated into the urban communities: in terms of community acceptance, family adoption and how this integration is reflected in the duration of stay in the community.

Migrants relocating between communities can also be attributed to their integration into the various communities; this study tried to determine if migrants are accepted/welcomed into the new communities and if it may have an impact on their departure. The respondents all said they were welcomed and are well-integrated into their communities (**100% of rural-to-urban migrants**).

Being able to easily integrate into the community may be influenced by the migrant’s choice of location; according to the focus group participants, the choice of a location is not only based on the opportunities available but also on the language spoken in the destination community and the ease of integration. This may be the reason why all migrants settle into their communities with ease.

The same reasons were cited by the Key Informants – they unanimously confirmed that rural to urban migrants are well integrated into their communities.

In Section :

**2.1 MAIN DRIVERS AND DETERMINANTS FOR RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRATION: WHY ARE GAMBIANS MIGRATING?'**

- it identified the various reasons why migrants relocated to different communities; it is equally important to determine if they are satisfied in their current localities. Figure 33 shows that 85% of migrants feel well integrated into their current community.

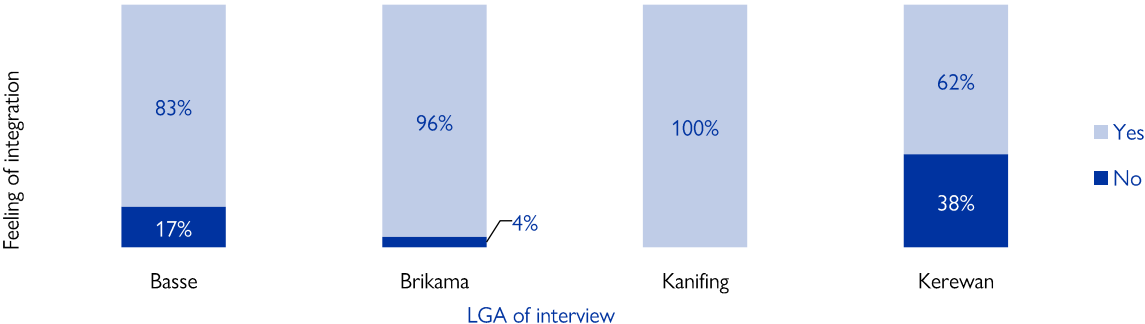


Figure 33: Migrants feel integrated in community by current LGA

It is also important to note that the remaining 15% of respondents, even though not satisfied with their current locality, feel well integrated into the community – this means dissatisfaction is not based on the influence of the locals and how well they integrate into the society. The Key Informants also testify that no tensions exist between

the migrants and community indigenes, which corresponds to migrants' perceptions of their own integration, as discussed above.

Currently, the agricultural sector employs seasonal workers due to the unpredictable climate conditions. This means there is a tendency that rural-to-urban may migrate based on the agricultural season (National Population Commission Secretariat, 2007). If the rainy season is over, individuals can move to urban settlements to find jobs and during the rainy season they may go back to rural settlements to engage in agricultural activities. It is also important to determine if the majority of migrants travel, based on the season. During the Key Informant interviews, nine out of the ten respondents mentioned that their community is usually a host to long-term migrants instead of short-term seasonal migrants.

Similar to the Key Informant's findings, **74%** of rural-to-urban migrants also mentioned that they intend on staying in their current community of residence instead of relocating to another locality (see Figure 34).



Figure 34: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants who plan on staying in current community

These long-term migrants were mentioned during the Key Informant interviews. According to the KIs, different types of migrants relocate to their communities, however, the most common type of migrant is the long-term migrant who typically stays for more than 5 years (refer to Figure 35 below). Fifty percent of respondents reported that migrants stay for more than 5 years.

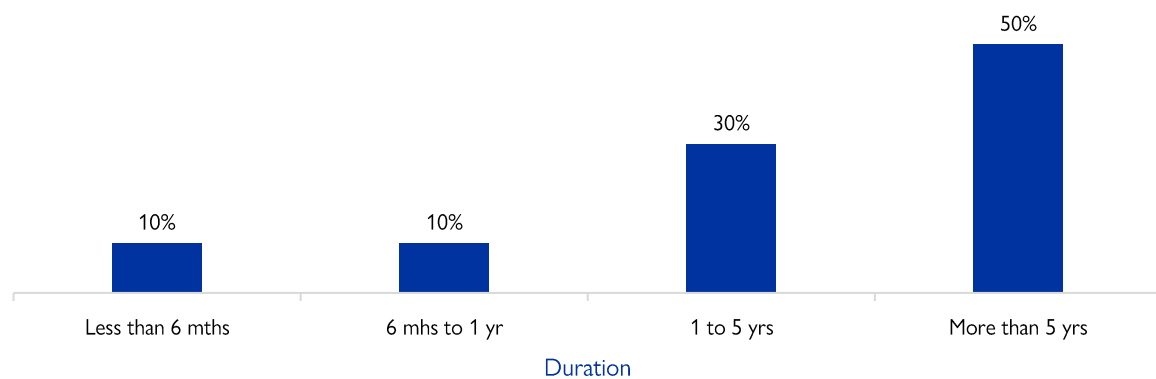


Figure 35: Duration of migrants stay in KI communities

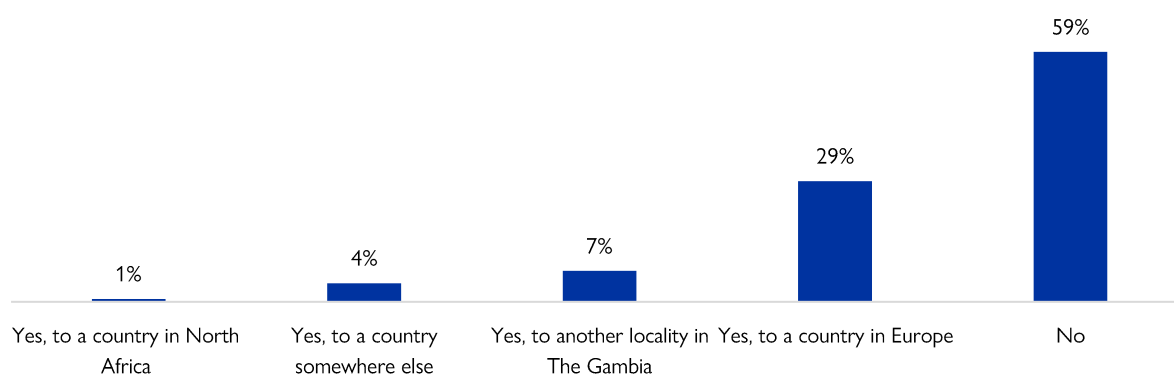
## 2.3. A SUB-SET OF MIGRANTS INTEND TO MIGRATE ABROAD

The Gambia is mostly a country of emigration with the main destination countries being the United States of America, Spain, the United Kingdom & Northern Ireland, and Sweden; some African countries include Senegal and Sierra Leone (MGSoG, 2017). With the current rate of unemployment in the country and the evident rural-to-urban drift, there may be a tendency to travel further, however, the urge to travel may also be reduced especially among respondents with personal business ventures.

In previous sections, it was stated that the main motivation behind the respondents' internal movement was to search for economic opportunities – expectations that have not been met for a subset of the research population. In this section, the tendency/likelihood for a migrant to travel abroad is discussed. This also includes determining if AVRR respondents have any intentions of travelling abroad again.

### *Determining the proportion of AVRR beneficiaries that still intend to travel further*

Assisted voluntary return and reintegration beneficiaries were asked if they had any plans to migrate again and the proposed region - 59% of respondents had no travel plans, as shown in Figure 36. However, 41% still had intentions to travel abroad. Of this 41% with further travel intentions, 29% had the intention to travel to Europe again, citing access to better economic opportunities as the main reason for migrating.



*Figure 36: Percentage of AVRR with plans to migrate further*

Determining the number of rural-to-urban migrants that intend to travel further

*“Some of us are prominent member of our community and would have a befitting burial in this community than any other place. Therefore, we will rather stay.”*

*“We will never migrate beyond the Gambian borders, but we can attest that some of our children and siblings still have plans to travel to Europe in search of greener pastures.”*

*“Most of us have family abroad, mostly Europe, and some are out of The Gambia. We do not know exactly where they are but believe that they could be on their way to Europe.”*

*“The youths in the community are influenced to travel by their friends and family members living abroad because of the little amount of money being they receive from them. These allowances received fetches them a lot of dalasis due to the value of foreign exchange rates. This really helps with the family upkeep particularly during the most difficult period such as the rainy season when it is hard to make a living.”*

**Focus group discussions with rural-to-urban migrants in the community of Soma, Mansakonko LGA**

The rural-to-urban migrants were also asked if they had any plans to migrate further (see Figure 37) and 60% cited that they had no plans to migrate further, however, 40% responded that they had plans to further travel with the majority identifying a European country.

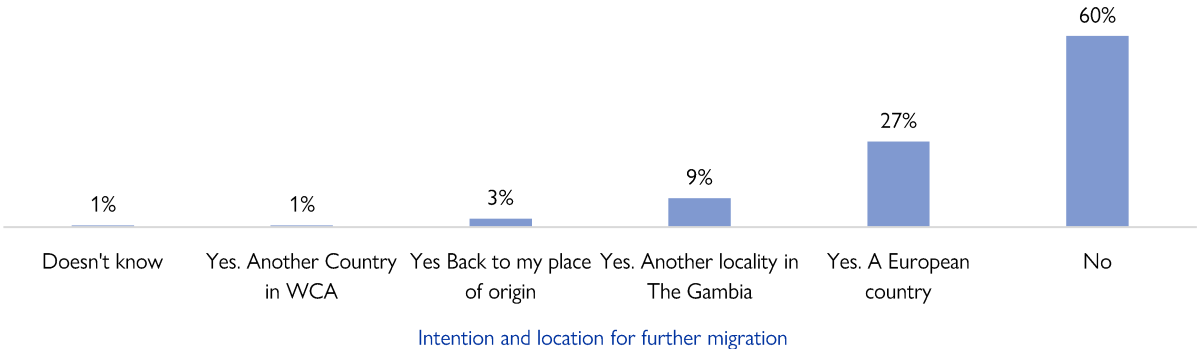


Figure 37: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants with plans to migrate further

It is interesting to note that the migrants with travel intentions mostly intend to travel to Europe (27%) or another locality in The Gambia, however, a very small proportion of rural-to-urban migrants, 1%, intend to travel to countries in West and Central Africa (WCA).

Among the 40% of rural-to-urban migrants with travel intentions, data shows that 70% are within 18–35 years (similar to the AVRR migrant figures). The majority of intended travellers are within the age group of 18–35 years for both the AVRR and rural-to-urban migrants.

During the focus group discussion with the rural-to-urban migrants, the majority of the participants mentioned that they intend to travel abroad if the opportunity arises. This study tried to understand the fascination with Europe

and the focus group discussion participants mentioned that European countries presented them with better opportunities in terms of higher income, more job opportunities and better living standards.

Interestingly, according to the rural-to-urban migrants, all migrants with travel plans are well integrated into their community. Indeed, it is important to understand the perception of migrants on the opportunities available in The Gambia – according to the FGD participants, The Gambian environment (low wages, no job, insufficient financial strength) does not provide opportunities for its citizens to be successful whereas their families and friends abroad “boast of big cars, higher wages and being homeowners”. The youth seems to be influenced by family and friends abroad especially due to the amount of remittance they receive – remittances that are used for the family upkeep (feeding costs, medical bills and/or education fees etc.) because the current income for the household is insufficient.

The World Bank reported that in 2018, remittances to low- and middle-income countries reached a record high (World Bank, 2019). There was a 9.6% increase between 2017 and 2018 with the official annual remittance flow reaching \$529 billion from \$483 billion. This shows a high dependency on remittances for recipients in low-and middle-income countries which may indicate a higher dependence on financial support by the recipients or a higher number of migrants. Economically, remittances to low – and middle – income countries (\$462 billion) are larger than Foreign Direct Investments in 2018 (\$344 billion) – except for investments from China.

In The Gambia, remittance contributes 15.3% of the GDP with an inflow of US\$245 million recorded in 2018 alone. This 2018 figure ranked the Gambia as 14<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of remittance contribution to its GDP (World Bank, 2017)

With such a high flow of remittance into the countries in the region, this study set to understand what could motivate migrants to remain in their community, and the majority cited a higher monthly salary/wage ranging from GMD 10,000-20,000 (approximately USD 200–400) primarily for family upkeep.

This study also sought to determine if the reason for further travel may be influenced by family members, however, according to Figure 38, 53% of the rural-to-urban migrants with travel plans are not residing with their families, rather they are alone, even though 72% are between 18–35 years old.

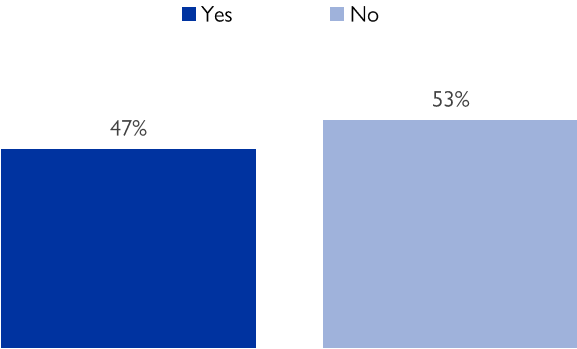


Figure 38: Percentage of rural-to-urban migrants with travel plans living with families

It is also important to point out that only 36% of AVRR migrated internally – with such a low proportion, it confirms that there is limited correlation between internal and international migration among rural-to-urban migrants.

## DISCUSSION

- There is a moderate number of rural-to-urban migrants that intend to travel further, however, for those that do intend to travel (27%), a majority selected Europe as their destination instead of countries in West or Central Africa. Citizens of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), have the Free Movement of Persons Protocol that allows visa-free entry, residence and establishment in any other member State (UNECA, 2019; ECOWAS, 2019), however, respondents would rather opt for countries with strict entry requirements.
- However, even if a certain number of rural-to-urban migrants (27%) affirm that they have plans to migrate further to a European country, it is fair to question whether this further migration abroad will actually take place. Results from individual interviews clearly showed that all rural-to-urban migrants are feeling very well integrated into their new urban communities, and this feeling is largely shared by key informants from the same communities who reported no tensions or conflicts between rural-to-urban migrants and the host communities.
- Lastly, research findings have shown that the reasons to leave rural communities are very different between males and females rural-migrants, as 46% of women affirm that they have migrated to urban areas to join their families, 30% for marriage, whereas 60% of men seem to migrate to find better economic opportunities (against only 12% of women rural-to-urban migrants).

## CONCLUSION

This study first examined the profile of rural citizens who settled into urban communities, while also highlighting the main factors driving their migration and the characteristics of rural-to-urban mobility in the scope of the research sample. As a sub-objective and using the specific case of migrant returnees assisted by IOM (AVRR beneficiaries), the study also strived to determine if a correlation in terms of sociodemographic profile, journeys, as well as travel intentions could be observed between international migration undertaken by AVRR beneficiaries and internal migration from rural to urban localities.

Based on the analysis of the results, the AVRR respondents have a higher proportion of travellers with secondary education (50%), whereas 49% of rural-to-urban migrants did not receive any formal education, showing that these two population groups have fairly different profiles. Results have also shown that AVRR beneficiaries tend to come from mainly urban regions as 31% originates from Brikama LGA, and 22% from Kanifing LGA. Additionally, rural-to-urban migrants tend to migrate with a long-term settlement plan in their current communities as evident in this study, with 74% of migrants intending to stay in their current locality.

**These results show that the majority of internal migrants** from rural to urban regions do not engage in onwards international migration. In the case of AVRR beneficiaries, 36% originating from urban regions moved internally to another urban area before migrating abroad. Sixty-four (64%) indicated that they had determined their plans to travel abroad from the beginning of their journey migrating directly from urban LGAs to their final destination abroad. However, differences in levels of education, age and migratory routes tend to indicate that **rural-to-urban migration represents an independent form of human mobility, with its own characteristics and specificities differing from those of AVRR beneficiaries.**

This study also shows that the majority (34%) of rural-to-urban migrants originated from Kerewan LGA and 20% from Mansakonko LGA; similar information was also highlighted in the 2013 Population and Housing Census. Migration within the same LGA was also recorded during this study with most of the movement happening within the Kerewan LGA, demonstrating that specific attention and investment is needed to ensure access to services enabling communities to remain in their localities of origin if they desire to do so.

Reliance on agriculture as a main source of income for most communities was also found to impact migration decision-making due to instability of rains which affects predictability of income of some households<sup>35</sup>. With such conditions, some Gambians might be forced to migrate to other communities and with those leaving being between the ages of 18–35 leaving. This mobility reduces the labour force for the agricultural sector. Therefore, improving agricultural techniques and diversification of livelihoods in rural areas could be considered in order to attract youth to these areas and to reduce potential detrimental impact of unmanaged mobility on areas of origin.

Given these mobility trends within The Gambia and as a country with one of the highest urban growth rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 60.6%<sup>36</sup> of the population living in urban settlements, this trend has long been noticed as an area of concern for government officials. The former Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands, Regional Administration and Local Government stated in 2016 that “*In particular, we will need to manage our urban areas in a way that enables accommodation of growth by providing adequate social and economic activities*”<sup>37</sup>. This increase in urbanisation comes with a number of challenges such as a stress on social services, especially in the health sector, an important impact on land/housing allocation with a lack of adequate infrastructure, and the potential lack of

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<sup>35</sup> It is also important to note that this study did not provide in-depth analysis into the impact of agriculture and climate change as a push factor to migration.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/525674/urbanization-in-gambia/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://foroyaa.gm/gambia-to-develop-national-urban-policy/>

employment opportunities<sup>38</sup>. Therefore, the Gambian National Development Plan for 2018 – 2021<sup>39</sup> has a priority to build an adequate national urbanisation plan and policies responding to urban poverty to successfully meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

With growing urbanisation in The Gambia, there has been an increase in the level of urban poverty, a stress on land/housing and unemployment<sup>40</sup>. The most populated LGAs are Kanifing and Brikama, hosting a majority of the population, therefore proper plans should be developed to better manage this rural-to-urban migration and its impact on both areas of origin and host areas. While these LGAs (mainly Kanifing and Brikama) are burdened with population increase (GBoS, 2013), the highly rural LGAs are affected with a heavy loss on its labour force especially in the agricultural sector (ThePoint, 2008).

Agricultural production is heavily impacted by climate change, such as changes in rainfall patterns and high temperatures. This clearly constitutes a push factor that may be causing men to leave rural areas for urban centres. As these environmental changes are likely to continue and worsen in The Gambia, it can be expected that this migration trend from rural to urban communities will also rise. As the main source of employment in rural communities, more innovative and sustainable methods should be adopted in the agricultural sector. This will ensure a constant source of employment or income year-round instead of relying solely on seasonal livelihood. Going forward, this study suggests that local, national and international actors align their efforts along the following five main recommendations:

- **Encourage both local government authorities and national government to support investments in Kanifing and Brikama LGAs to respond to their rapid urbanisation and to cater for the increasing migrant community;** As the population in these regions will likely continue to increase, it will cause a strain on the services available to the residents in urban communities<sup>41</sup> – such as access to health services, accommodation, education and even employment. Investment should be made to ensure that access to basic amenities is sufficient to cater for the growing population and to respond to urban poverty<sup>42</sup>. This issue requires attention among local administration but also national government, mostly because planning and financing urban infrastructure evolves around close coordination among multiple partners.
- **Support the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Gambia National Youth Council, national and regional youth organisations, as well as district youth groups to create and provide programmes in rural communities to offer sustainable employment alternatives to young residents (18- 35).** In the Gambia, youth represents almost 60% of the national population<sup>43</sup> and young people are more likely

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<sup>38</sup> UN-Habitat. (2011). *The Gambia national urban profile*. Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements programme (UN-Habitat).

<sup>39</sup> The Gambia national development plan 2018 – 2021 : <http://www.thegambiatimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1.-the-gambia-national-development-plan-2018-2021-full-version.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> UN-Habitat. (2011). *The Gambia national urban profile*. Kenya: United Nations Human Settlements programme (UN-Habitat).

<sup>41</sup> Idem.

<sup>42</sup> One of the priorities of the Gambia national development plan (NDP) for 2016 – 2020 and 2018 - 2021 was to develop a sustainable urban development strategy to be able to respond to the rapid urban growth and to adopt a comprehensive approach reinforcing linkages between rural and urban areas in the country in order to reduce poverty. <http://www.thegambiatimes.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1.-the-gambia-national-development-plan-2018-2021-full-version.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <https://nyc.gm/>



to be affected by the lack of employment opportunities<sup>44</sup>. Young Gambians are therefore engaging in migration, both internal and international<sup>45</sup>, as an adaptation strategy. Therefore, supporting *youth empowerment projects* and increasing economic resilience of rural zones could be an effective way to ensure residents have an alternative to urban migration and decide to migrate by choice and not out of necessity.

- Job creation in urban areas will be an important challenge moving forward, and it will be imperative to bring in the private sector and **create a business environment for job creation** (beyond trade and construction, which are normally low productivity and volatile to external factors). Lack of public and private investment reflects a bad business environment including access to finance
- **Support governments to invest in rural LGAs to promote and create adequate services (education, transport, health, work) currently more readily available in the urban regions.** Study results indicate that migrants are departing their place of origin in search of better economic opportunities and access to quality services and commodities. These services and opportunities should be made available within the rural communities thus promoting decentralisation. Investing in strong services could also be a way of ensuring sustainable reintegration of return migrants extending the support provided by IOM through reintegration assistance programmes provided by IOM. Improving quality of services in rural areas could also attract the return of skilled migrants abroad and potentially lower drivers of re-migration from these same areas.
- **Encourage local, national and civil society organisations to reinforce spaces for dialogue and mechanisms for interaction with government institutions to better understand migrants and communities' aspiration, frustrations and needs in the short, medium and long-term.** It is important that voices of both rural-to-urban, return migrants and host communities are heard to influence decision-making processes at the local and national levels.
- **Encourage governmental organisations, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, through the department of agricultural services, to invest in sustainable and innovative agricultural practices for communities that depend highly on agricultural production as the main source of income.** As agriculture is an important sector in the country, investments in value addition (or value chains production), adoption of innovative and modern farming techniques/tools adapted to temperature variations and climate change effects should be considered. This also presents multiple employment (and educational) options for return migrants and could help address the high level of youth unemployment rate, reaching 38% in The Gambia<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> According to Altai consulting the youth unemployment rate reached 38% in 2016 in the Gambia.

<sup>45</sup> In this research the group of 26–35 is the most represented for rural-urban migrants and voluntary return migrants assisted by the IOM.

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2018/03/26/gambias-migration-paradox-the-horror-and-promise-of-the-back-way>

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