

# **Rural-Urban Mobilities: Adolescents at the entry-level of the urban economy of West Africa**

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# Mobilities as a source of livelihood

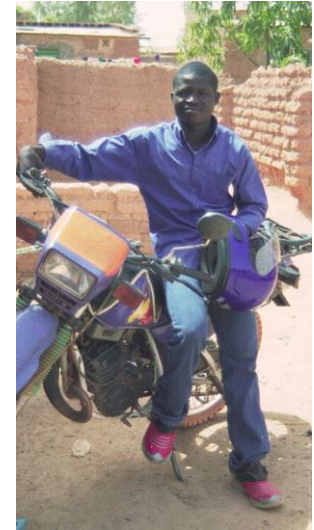
As work opportunities and  
a way to get to know the city



As skills acquisition



As a means to  
build social status



# Adolescent mobilities



# From rural villages to big cities

- ❖ Mobility – an extension of economic activities
- ❖ Working in the city is a chance to gain time for independent activities
- ❖ Travel companion makes a difference



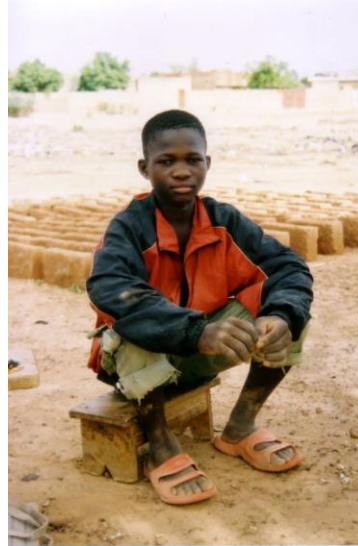
# Adolescent migrant workers in Ouagadougou Burkina Faso

- ❖ Traveling alone or with peers
  - Asking for work from door to door
  - Entry into under-paid work
- ❖ Traveling with senior kin
  - Working as unpaid family labour
  - Being placed with an employer



# Occupational repertoire

- ❖ Itinerant street work
- ❖ Low-end restaurants and food places
- ❖ Brick-makers and donkey cart drivers
- ❖ Apprentices (few)

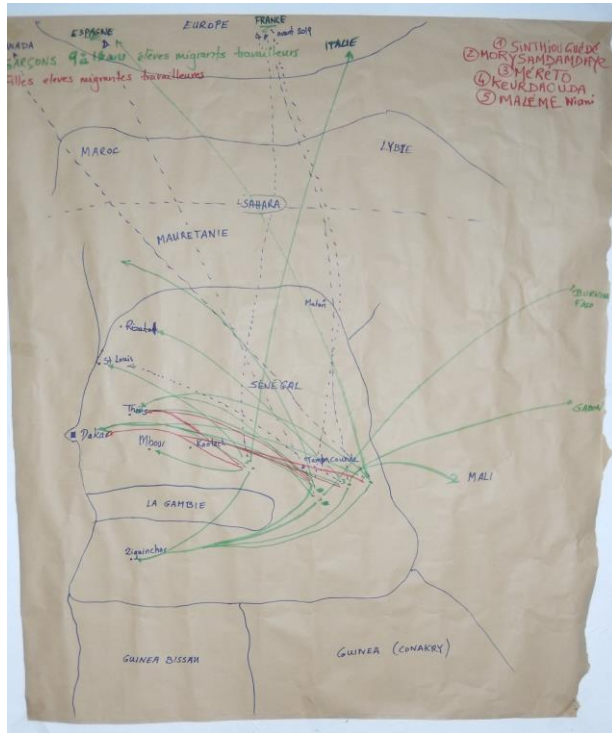


# Youth migrants from rural Burkina Faso in Abidjan Côte d'Ivoire



- ❖ Dependency on kin due to labour market distrust
  - Work in shops, cafés and road-side food stalls ⇒ family labour
  - Work in hand-irrigated vegetable farming and brick-making ⇒ wage labour

# Adolescent migration to work in the school holidays





# Covid-19 and the fallout of containment responses on adolescent migrants

- ❖ No research on the effects on adolescent migrants
  - Ouagadougou – lockdown for three weeks, rising food prices
  - Abidjan – unplanned settlements operate at the margins of authority, lockdown would be almost impossible
  - Ziguinchor – markets reopened in May, however school closures affect all students and may increase the desire to move for work

# Key take-aways

1. How to work for decent work with some form of formalisation without losing the informal social protection of the youngest workers?
2. How to harness the flexibility of successive jobs to introduce rural youths to a much broader range of occupations than is available at the village level?
3. Devise a social insurance for adolescent migrants to cushion them against shocks

# Thank you

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