

Creating better economic opportunities for women in Nairobi slums through improved childcare options ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Project context

Creating better economic opportunities for women in Nairobi slums through improved childcare options is one of 11 projects funded through the Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) program, implemented by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and funded by IDRC, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and UKaid. The project began October 31st 2014 and will be completed October 30th 2017.

This project posits that the economic empowerment of women across developing countries is strongly linked to the provision of quality childcare and education. Since 1997, Kenya has made significant strides to improve the provision of early childcare and education (ECCE). In 2006, the Ministry of Education released national guidelines on the quality standards for childcare. Nonetheless, the impact of access to child care on women's labor force participation has not been rigorously assessed. This project will examine the relationship between the provision of ECCE and the economic empowerment of poor, slum-dwelling women in Nairobi.

The study site is Korogocho, an informal urban settlement of approximately 200,000 people in northeast Nairobi, located 11 km from the city centre. One of the project partners, the African Population Health Research Centre (APHRC) has over 15 years of experience in conducting research in the settlement including, since 2002, the management of the Nairobi Urban Health and Demographic Surveillance System (NUHDSS) in Korogocho as well as another informal settlement area across the city.

Project goal

The goal of the project is to assess the impact of childcare constraints on the economic empowerment of poor, urban women in Kenya, producing an empirical foundation upon which to develop effective policies. Through this assessment, this project will deepen our understanding of how limited childcare options prevent poor women from participating in the labor force and reduce women's income. Specifically, we will test the effectiveness of reducing the cost and improving the quality of daycare services on women's labor force participation and income in the Korogocho slum in Nairobi, Kenya.

Project objectives

The project specifically aims to:

1. Investigate current childcare arrangements used by women living in Korogocho, and assess the benefits and risks of these different options.
2. To investigate enrolment choices and determine whether women offered subsidized daycare are more likely to enrol their children in daycare programs.
3. To evaluate the economic impact of enrolment on women by subsidizing and improving the quality of local daycare centers including their labor force participation, the number of hours worked per week, and household income.
4. To evaluate the economic impact of subsidized and improving quality of local daycares for the most marginalized and disadvantaged women including recent migrants and single mothers?

The key approach is an intervention of subsidized daycare and enhanced ECCE quality, followed by evaluation of any changes in women's labor force participation. We will use the most recent Nairobi Urban Health and Demographic Surveillance System (NUHDSS) enumeration as a sampling frame to identify mothers with at least one child between the age of 1 and 4, from which we will draw a random sample of 900 women for a baseline quantitative survey and randomized intervention. From these 900 women, 30 participants will be selected to participate in In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) approximately six months after the baseline interview. In addition, we will use PhotoVoice methodology to engage mothers in depicting critical issues related to their perceptions on the relationship between childcare and employment. Four groups of 12 women each (48 women in total) will take photos and develop descriptions of their photos. We will

then use the photos and descriptions captured by these women in 5 follow-up Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), which will include 10-12 mothers who conducted the PhotoVoice as well as local community leaders.

We aim to provide evidence-based recommendations for the development of effective policies and programs to enhance childcare opportunities for poor women and, thereby, reduce one of the main barriers to women's full engagement with the workforce and economic independence.

Region: Africa ^[3]

Tags: women's labour force participation ^[4]

women ^[5]

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