



# Migration and development dynamics in Down Quarters, Nigeria

Down Quarters is a slum-like settlement in central Kaduna, located close to industry and a new inland dry port. Residents mostly rely on informal livelihoods, without benefiting from these investments.

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Owing to its convenient location, Down Quarters has a long history of in-migration. One-third of young adults were born elsewhere in Nigeria.

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Diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion, residents describe Down Quarters as a peaceful location, despite wider conflict in the north of the country.

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The population is highly mobile. Internal migration in search of better livelihoods is very common.



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Photo: Aisha Adamu for MIGNEX.

Down Quarters is a neighbourhood in the centre of Kaduna, the capital of Kaduna State, Nigeria. It is flanked by the Kaduna River, the colonial railway station and Kaduna Inland Dry Port.

It is an ethnically diverse, slum-like settlement, which grew as living quarters for workers of the Nigerian Railway Corporation in the early 20th century. Down Quarters attracted migrants from all over Nigeria because of nearby economic opportunities, including the railway and factories.

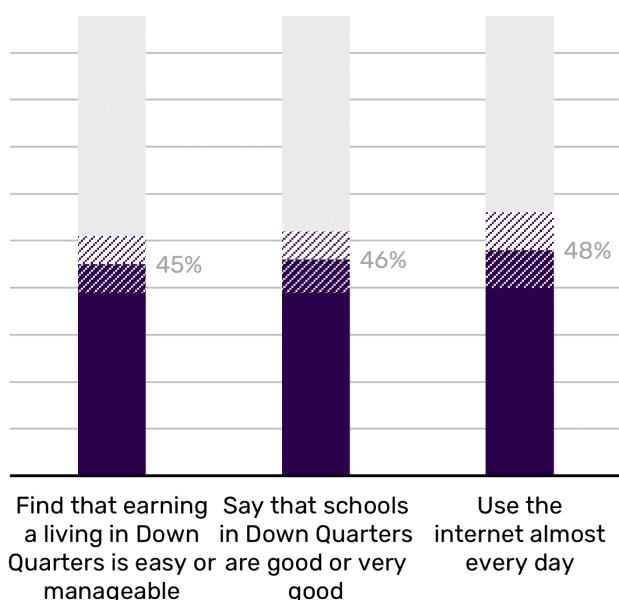
Most industry has now collapsed, and the dry port has not led to the expected expansion in available jobs. Livelihoods for Down Quarters' residents are mostly informal, unpredictable and low paid. One in five (19%) of young adults surveyed in Kombolcha are unemployed and more than a third (39%) engage in irregular work, such as bricklaying. Others run small businesses, including mechanic workshops and beauty salons.

By earning daily wages, people make just enough money to get by. Over half (55%) of young adults surveyed in Down Quarters consider it difficult to earn a living and feed a family.

This case study brief is based on fieldwork and survey data. The MIGNEX team also conducted research in Awe and Ekpoma and carried out a review of migration-relevant policies in Nigeria.<sup>1</sup>

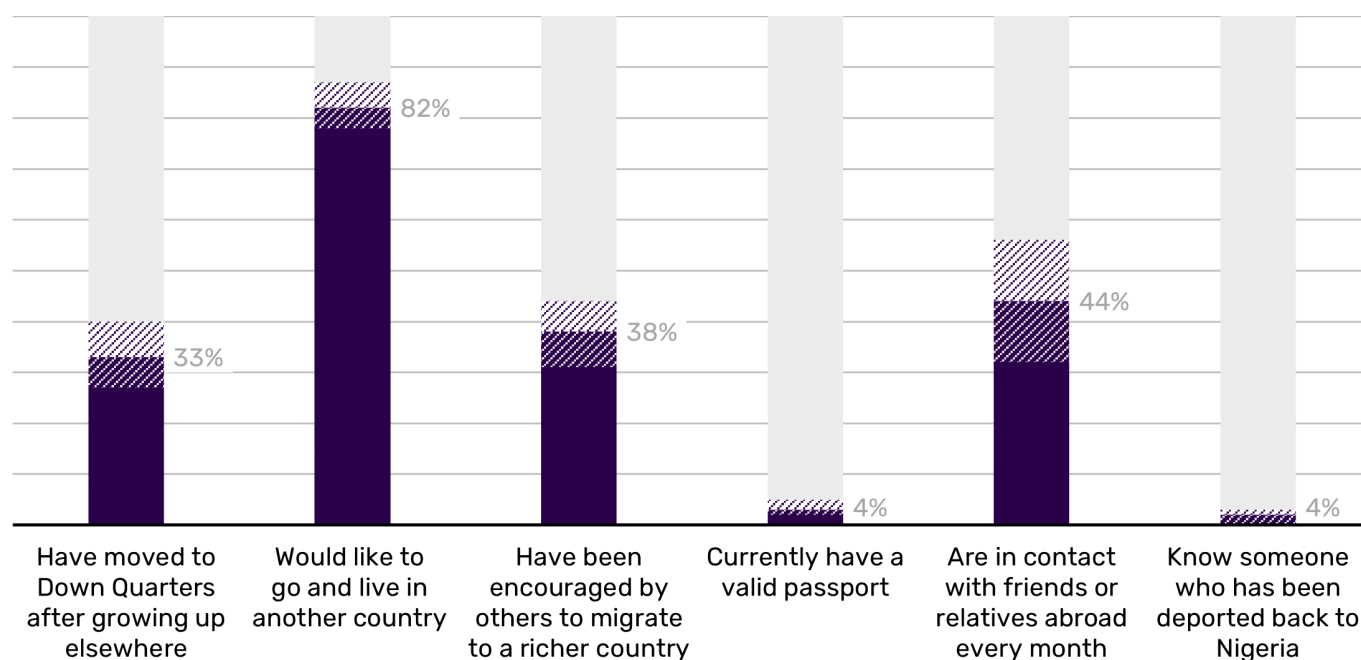
### Migration from Down Quarters

Down Quarters has always been a mobile community, with people coming and going in search of livelihood opportunities and for security reasons. Internal migration to Down Quarters from elsewhere in Nigeria is most common. Over one-third (35%) of surveyed young adults know of someone from Down Quarters who has migrated internally in the past five years.



**Figure 1. Indicators of development**

Source: MIGNEX Survey. Hatched area: confidence interval.



**Figure 2. Indicators of migration dynamics**

Source: MIGNEX survey. Hatched area: confidence interval.

Men tend to migrate to major cities like Lagos, Port Harcourt or Abuja, where they are most likely to find employment. Seasonal migration is also common. Men usually return to Down Quarters to celebrate festivities with their families and send remittances to family staying in the area. Women, on the other hand, are most likely to migrate for marriage, moving to different areas across Nigeria.

The few residents who have migrated abroad to countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia are seen in a positive light because of the remittances they send to their families and to support community projects.

The majority (89%) of surveyed young adults would migrate to a richer country if given the necessary papers.

International migration is particularly uncommon for women. In Down Quarters, few young men (2%) and practically no young women interviewed for this case study have lived abroad for at least one year.

### Migration aspirations

Many residents are hopeful for the future of Down Quarters, due to the importance that most individuals place on religion. Importance is also placed on education as the foundation

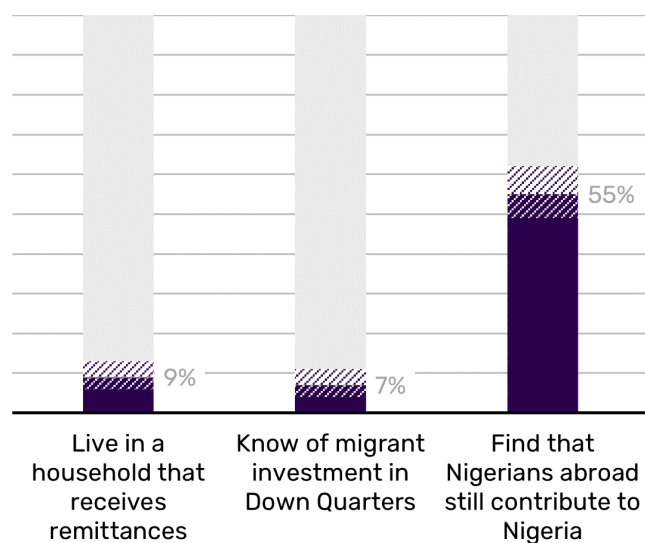
for success, and the overall atmosphere is lively and bustling.

Migration is not an important component of young people's hopes for the future. While the majority (82%) of surveyed young adults would prefer to leave Down Quarters in the next five years, international migration is not a feasible prospect for many. Most people do not have the funds to migrate. This means that, despite widespread aspirations to leave, only 35% of young adults have seriously considered migrating internationally in the past year.

Residents consider success abroad as highly dependent on having the right skills to secure a good job. Awareness of the negative aspects of migration is also high, such as risky journeys or racism in destination countries. More than half of young adults surveyed (58%) expect to stay in Nigeria in the next five years.

*Most of the graduates have moved out of Down Quarters. You can't be a graduate and remain in Down Quarters.*

Focus group participant



**Figure 3. Migration–development interactions**

Source: MIGNEX Survey. Hatched area: confidence interval.

### In-migration

Down Quarters has a long history of in-migration. Around two-thirds (67%) of surveyed young adults grew up in Down Quarters; the remainder are internal migrants from elsewhere in Nigeria.

Its central location in Kaduna, nearby economic opportunities, tertiary education institutions and cheap living conditions have continued to make Down Quarters an attractive location for low-income migrants from all over Nigeria. It is also seen as a peaceful place, where different ethnicities and religions live together, unlike in other parts of Kaduna State where ethno-religious tensions and violence are rife. Both men and women migrate to Down Quarters for livelihood opportunities. Overall, in-migrants are perceived to integrate well into the

community, but they are sometimes stigmatised. Some 51% of young adults perceive the area to have become more dangerous in the past five years, with some residents ascribing the rising crime rate to migrants.

### Links between migration and development

For those young adults who have migrant family or friends, most (67%) are in touch on a monthly basis only. One-third (33%) of young adult households with family, relatives or friends abroad reported had received remittances in the past year. However, this was not the most important income source for any household.

Collective remittances are uncommon in Down Quarters, yet they are of interest to residents. One of the most significant and often talked about contributions is 1 million Naira (US\$2,350) sent by a migrant towards the refurbishment of the inter-faith cemetery in Down Quarters.

Infrequent remittances are also sent by internal migrants who associate in informal groups with other migrants. They are used for community projects such as street cleaning and sanitation, the rehabilitation of roads or to purchase books and other educational materials for schools.

### Notes

1. Fieldwork consisting of key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations was carried out by Aisha Umaru Adamu and James Akpokos Amos in October–November 2021, collaborating remotely with Jessica Hagen-Zanker. A face-to-face survey of 500 randomly selected residents (aged 18–39 years) was conducted by Noi Polls in July–August 2021.

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MIGNEX – Aligning Migration Management and the Migration–Development Nexus – is a five-year research project (2018–2023) with the core ambition of creating new knowledge on migration, development and policy. It is carried out by a consortium of nine partners: The Peace Research Institute Oslo (coordinator), Danube University Krems, the University of Ghana, Koç University, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Maastricht University, ODI, the University of Oxford and Samuel Hall.

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