

Namibia: Study shows unemployment contributes to migration

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The growth in informal settlements in Windhoek is influenced by factors such as unemployment, low income levels, a lack of interest in urban investment, a lack of proper understanding of the urban situation, exorbitant prices of land and the lack of government support, says Dr Andrew Niikondo in his study, "Migrants to cities and towns in Namibia: the dynamics of investing in urban versus rural areas."

The study, which was conducted in the informal settlements of Havana, Ombili and Okahandja Park, investigates whether the rural-urban migrants' economic ties to their rural houses and families, affect their interest and ability to invest in urban properties and hence cause them to opt to dwell in a shack instead.

"This study investigates the issue of migration to informal settlements in the City of Windhoek, examining this multi-faceted phenomenon from the perspective of the rural to urban and urban to urban movement of people and, more importantly, with a specific focus on whether these people are intending to remain in urban areas in the long term, and to invest in urban properties," Niikondo said at a public lecture based on his study at the Polytechnic of Namibia this week.

Also speaking at the public lecture, Jerry Ekandjo, Minister of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development said informal settlements have increased exponentially and continue to increase due to the influx of people from rural to urban centres for better opportunities; employment being the major driving force.

"Informal settlers migrate from other areas and occupy spaces that are not prepared and habitable for human standards. They find themselves living in shacks in areas where there are no provision for services, in the form of sanitation, water, electricity, roads, access to social services such as schools, clinics, recreational centres and others. This state of affairs is attributable not only to lack of employment but also to a number of factors which has led to housing ownership not being affordable," Ekandjo said.