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Montgomery, Mark R. and Paul C. Hewett. "Poverty and children's schooling in urban and rural Senegal" *Policy Research Division Working Paper* no. 196. New York: Population Council. ([PDF](#))

Abstract

This paper presents findings of an investigation into the effects of living standards and relative poverty on children's schooling in urban and rural areas of Senegal. To measure living standards, we apply a multiple-indicator, multiple-cause (MIMIC) factor-analytic model to a set of proxy variables collected in the 2000 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and extract an estimate of the relative standard of living for each household. Using this estimate, we find that in Senegal's urban areas, living standards exert substantial influence on three measures of schooling: Whether a child has ever attended school; whether he or she has completed at least four grades of primary school; and whether he or she is currently enrolled. In rural areas of Senegal, however, the effects are weaker and achieve statistical significance only for the wealthiest fifth of rural households. Two educational inequalities persist with living standards held constant. First, the advantages enjoyed by urban families in Senegal remain considerable: Even the poorest fifth of urban children are more likely than rural children to have attended school, to have completed four years or more of primary education, and to be currently enrolled. Second, gender gaps in schooling are pervasive and are only modestly influenced by standards of living. In both urban and rural areas of Senegal, girls suffer from marked disadvantages relative to boys in all three measures of schooling. In wealthier urban households, girls' disadvantages are smaller, but not completely eliminated. Furthermore, no systematic reduction in female disadvantage is apparent in rural Senegal, even in the uppermost stratum of households. To judge from these findings, in Senegal income growth alone is unlikely to close the schooling gap between urban and rural areas or between boys and girls.

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