# Migration and Development

# Introduction

The relationship between migration and development is complex. While rich regions tend to attract immigrants, the poorest regions are not those with the highest emigration. Indeed, individuals need to own a certain degree of resources to finance international migration and a certain level of education to access labour markets in countries of destination. The short-term impact of economic growth in poor areas is generally an increase in emigration (de Haas, 2007). Second, migration is a potential driver of development both in destination and origin countries. Migrants bring their productive contribution to the economy at destination. They remit money and ideas that are resources for families and communities in countries of origin. Moreover, social capital can be expanded through migration and transnational connections between places of origin and destination, connecting distant regions and communities. However, some questions arise with regard to migration in North and West Africa, and along the CMR.

To begin, what are the factors that hinder or support migrants' ability to contribute to development? In particular, what is the impact of an irregular status in countries of transit and destination? In countries of transit, irregularity can expose migrants to uncertainty and to higher vulnerability. In countries of destination, it often leads them to experience worse access to basic services, take up poorly paid jobs and be unable to make longer-term plans. All these factors can hinder migrants' ability to contribute to development in countries of origin, transit and destination. They can also have an impact on the local labour market in countries of destination, in particular through wage dumping.

In addition, current policy efforts, especially in the European Union, to address irregular migration are largely based on the assumption that development programmes will reduce emigration by addressing its "root causes". This approach is in contrast with empirical findings that development may, on the contrary, increase emigration from lower-income countries and that migration can constitute a very important contribution to development and resilience, if adequate policies are in place (Clemens, 2014). The question is what the longer-term impact of current policy approaches will be on migration and development in African countries.

In West Africa, long-standing transnational links, nowadays fostered by new communication technologies and the engagement of diaspora associations with home countries are factors that make migration work for development (Quartey, Addoquaye Tagoe and Boatemaa Setrana, Chapter 21 of this volume). The links transnational migrants establish between various communities – such as their villages of origin, the neighbourhoods of the capital cities of their home countries where they first migrated, and the diasporas they joined in the foreign countries where they now live – create a "multi-sited village" with its own economy. Migrants consider themselves successful once they can provide support to economic initiatives in the village of origin (Dia, Chapter 22 of this volume).

An overlooked aspect of migration is that it can bolster local development in receiving areas inside Africa, which in turn calls for more migrants and triggers a virtuous circle of migration and development. In the regions of Mali and Burkina Faso where gold mining has attracted migrants from within the country or its neighbours, the prosperity mining brings has fostered the emergence of numerous service and production activities not directly linked to mining, themselves attracting migrant workers. Positive side effects this has had is to divert migratory flows and slow down the pace of rural-to-urban migration (Boukare, Chapter 23 of this volume).

Libya has historically been a major destination country for foreign workers from across sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia, who have significantly contributed to the local economies. Migrants´ integration in the Libyan labour market has economic outcomes for migrant and Libyan communities alike (Borgnäs, Cottone and Teppert, Chapter 24 of this volume).

At the margins and in the heart of the Sahara Desert, countries along the CMR face acute environmental threats in relation to extreme heat and drought, unstable precipitation, land degradation and desertification. Climate change will only make uninhabitable areas increase throughout the region (Sultan, Chapter 25 of this volume).

Important as they are, adaptation and resilience strategies may have limits. The geographic extension of contexts hostile to human settlement should therefore incite States and international agencies to rethink the simplistic binary vision opposing jobseekers and asylum seekers, according to which migrants who do not meet the criteria that international refugee law uses to define a refugee are "economic" migrants, supposedly set on the move by a desire to improve their economic situations. The time has arrived to move beyond the dichotomy of "voluntary" versus "forced" migrants, and to recognize the complexity of migration decisions in international law and policy instruments.

Meanwhile, States and international agencies must design concrete strategies to tackle land degradation and slow down the impact of climate change in sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb. The Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security (3S Initiative), which has succeeded in bringing together 14 African countries[1] to increase arable land and create rural jobs to counter forced migration, is an example of such strategies (Bendandi, Chapter 26 of this volume).

Return migration is a sizeable phenomenon in West Africa. It can be part of an initial plan of temporary migration, or the unexpected outcome of a migratory project. In either case, it has an impact on the families and communities migrants return to, and on local development. With laws on entry and stay being increasingly enforced along the entire CMR, the category of migrants returned from a country where they were staying, and often working, with an irregular status is growing in numbers. How to transform their failed migration projects into successes is a challenge. When Algeria started to tighten expulsion measures against undocumented migrants, the Niger became a country of transit for tens of thousands of foreign migrants deported from Algeria. The Niger responded to this phenomenon by establishing – with the support of IOM – transit centres to train migrants for economic reintegration and to assist them with voluntary return to their homes. The sustainability of microbusinesses set up by return migrants who benefitted from business management trainings in the Niger is still to be monitored (Yuen, Chapter 27 of this volume). Building on previous work on the conceptualization and measurement of the "sustainability" of reintegration for migrants returning home, IOM has also piloted a mentoring approach in Guinea, Senegal and Morocco, to step up dedicated support to returnees (Paone, Chapter 29 of this volume).

The overall effect of voluntary return migration to Senegal seems positive, as the rise of return migration has been paralleled by an upsurge in the creation of micro-businesses and technological change due to expertise and skills acquired by migrants during their experience abroad (Tandian, Chapter 28 of this volume).

[1] Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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