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Moving Beyond "Root Causes"

The Complicated Relationship between Development and Migration

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Executive Summary

The twin policy areas of migration and development have become inexorably connected in the minds of political leaders worldwide, and particularly so for many of those whose countries have recently experienced increases in unmanaged migration. While migration and development experts have long pushed for the elevation of these issues on the political agenda, the strength with which they have become linked has raised some concerns. Policymakers have increasingly invoked development, or more specifically a lack of development in migrants' countries of origin, as a "root cause" of disorderly migration flows, pledging greater investments in development assistance to address this "migration driver."

Yet years of research and experience in the development field suggest that the relationship between migration and development is hardly this simple. In fact, the surest answer that can be given to the question of whether economic development can reduce migration is "it depends." At a country level, emigration may actually increase as a society experiences development. But at the individual and household level, where decisions about whether to migrate or not are made, evidence suggests that the relationship between development conditions and migration patterns is even more nuanced and extremely context specific.

It is true that development considerations (e.g., conflict, environmental change, and a lack of economic opportunities) can give rise to migration ambitions. Migration can serve as a risk management strategy for individuals and families in situations where local livelihoods have become unsustainable. For some, migration can also be a way to "get ahead" by generating extra income to start a business or invest in new productive assets or skills. But these same development-related factors can also limit migration. Moving, particularly across an international border, is a complicated and expensive undertaking, and requires a certain level of knowledge and financial resources. In communities experiencing emigration, studies have repeatedly found that it is households higher up the income scale, not the poorest, that send family members abroad—they have the resources to do so.

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The availability of information on migration opportunities to would-be migrants and the past migration experience of an individual or community are even more important than economic conditions in determining migration decisions. Whether or not an individual or household has contact with emigrants abroad is the single strongest predictor of future migration, providing as it does information on routes and opportunities abroad, financing for a journey, and stories of success that may inspire a move. Other factors outside the realm of development also play an important role, including the existence of established migration routes and involvement of smugglers. In short, it is the interaction of this range of contextual factors with development conditions at the individual, household, and community levels that shapes whether and how migration occurs.

For policymakers, the complex nature of migrant decision-making suggests that they may find development assistance to be a blunt tool for reshaping migration patterns. At a minimum, assistance programs must take into account why and how migration occurs at a very local level. Initiatives that focus narrowly on building household assets through "livelihoods development" activities (e.g., business development grants and vocational training) without simultaneously creating opportunities to use these new assets locally may end up intensifying rather than redirecting migration ambitions by removing barriers to emigration without addressing the reasons it occurs in the first place. Yet tailoring development programs too closely to migration objectives by, for example, targeting aid only to individuals deemed most likely to move, may risk undermining both development and migration policy goals in the long term by neglecting the broader development needs of communities.

One way forward may be to shift the focus away from developing individuals' capabilities and assets and toward the creation of alternative opportunities more broadly. Investing in developing the broader economic or governance structures that are a prerequisite for economic growth and stability may offer more opportunities in the long run. Policymakers searching for short–term victories may need to be open to the idea of working with, rather than against, migration trends. Where migration has become a well-established strategy for dealing with risk or getting ahead, achieving a complete and quick reversal of this dynamic is unlikely, and efforts to do so may do more harm than good. Instead, looking for ways to facilitate safe and legal migration, particularly at the regional level, may offer a more realistic solution.

I. Introduction

Migration has surged to the forefront of national and global policy agendas. Statistics on the record levels of forced displacement have become common knowledge in policy circles, and the journeys of migrants and refugees, particularly across the Mediterranean, have become increasingly visible in the mass media.

In tandem, managing migration in a safe and effective way has become a global policy priority. At the national level, this has often translated to increased investments in border security and the return of migrants without legal grounds to remain in the country, at times through cooperation with destination countries, such as Turkey, and transit countries along the most frequently used migration corridors, such as Niger. There is also a growing interest at the highest political levels in addressing what have come to be termed in policy circles the "drivers" or "root causes" of unsafe or unmanaged migration—including, most notably, a lack of economic development or livelihood opportunities. The result is a renewed focus by political leaders on how development, humanitarian protection, and immigration policies and objectives can be further connected.

The increasing linkage of these fields can be seen in the fact that migration has recently been integrated into the sustainable development goals the international community has set for itself; when it was adopted in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development committed signatory states to ensuring that migration occurs in a "safe, orderly, regular, and responsible" way (Target 10.7).[1] And at a practical level, international development agencies are expanding their work to include migration as a focus area. For example, the European Union's Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) for 2014–20, which sets out EU priorities for development funding, included migration both as an investment priority within DCI regional initiatives and as its own thematic program.[2]

As these policy domains intersect, there is a pressing need to understand exactly how development conditions, dynamics, and interventions influence individuals' decisions to migrate, as well as the routes and legal pathways they take. This policy brief will examine what is known about the influence of development trends and interventions on migration. It begins by examining current policy narratives about migration and development, and the extent to which these narratives reflect reality. It then considers what the complexity of the relationship between development and migration in practice means for policymakers.

II. Unpacking Policy Narratives about Development and Migration

At the heart of an increasingly noisy debate on migration and development is a fundamental question, the origins of which lie in the divergent narratives of two very different policy camps: Is migration the result of development failures, or is it a normal biproduct of development processes—one that could be further leveraged for development gain?

Within destination-country ministries of migration, home affairs, and the interior, policymakers have tended to see development—or more specifically a lack of development in countries of origin—as one of the root causes of migration and, as a result, one of the challenges they face in securing their national borders. Underlying this is an assumption that migration is inherently a reaction to economic constraints and scarcity, that people move because there are insufficient opportunities in origin countries.[3] Thus, the logic goes, if economic and livelihoods opportunities in such countries are improved, outward migration will decrease. These voices have tended to drive policy responses to rising mixed migration flows at the national and EU level. The European Commission's 2015 European Agenda on Migration, for example, made development assistance to origin countries a top priority, explaining that "development cooperation plays an important role in tackling global issues like poverty, insecurity, inequality, and unemployment, which are among the main root causes of irregular and forced migration."[4]

In contrast to views that characterize migration as a problem, other voices within national and international policy debates highlight the potential development benefits of migration. Development experts at the World Bank, for instance, have pointed to the value of the remittances migrants send to their families and home communities and of the transfer of skills and knowledge gained abroad, while acknowledging that migration can have costs (e.g., the loss of skilled or entrepreneurial workers by origin countries).[5] The goal has thus been to ensure that migration occurs in a way that limits its costs to individuals and to origin and destination countries, while promoting mobility's potential benefits.

At the international level, the migration-development conversation has occupied something of a middle ground between these divergent views. International agreements have typically embraced the aim of reducing migration that is unsafe, irregular, or disorderly (e.g., migration that is forced or that occurs as the result of economic necessity)—a goal around which broad consensus can be built. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants issued by the UN General Assembly in 2016 embraced this logic, affirming that "migration should be a choice, not a necessity."[6] The exact mechanisms by which this goal would be best accomplished, however, remain up for debate. The New York Declaration takes an inclusive view of potential policy solutions; it commits states to addressing "movements caused by poverty, instability, marginalization and exclusion, and the lack of development and economic opportunities," while at the same time pledging to "consider facilitating opportunities for safe, orderly, and regular migration" as a part of a new Global Compact for Migration.[7]

III. It's Complicated: Challenging the "Root Causes" Narrative

The relationship between development conditions and migration flows is much more complex and nuanced than policy and political discourses, particularly at the national level, commonly acknowledge. In fact, research has even called into question the common assumption that economic development in countries of origin will reduce emigration; numerous studies have found that macroeconomic development (measured by increased per capital GDP), up until a certain level, is likely to increase outward migration.[8] In other words, as countries become richer and residents have more resources at their disposal, emigration is likely to increase, not decrease, at least initially—a phenomenon known as the "migration hump."

However, migration flows are not a unified phenomenon and do not respond in a predictable and coherent way to particular stimuli. Rather, migration fundamentally starts at an individual and household level, with people and families making difficult decisions about whether to move or stay in response to a constellation of incentives, constraints, and opportunities. These decisions are based on the specific (and often incomplete) information available to them. Neither of the common narratives—that a *lack* of development causes migration or that *more* development increases migration—does justice to the complexity of these dynamics.

Research over the last 15 years, particularly at the individual and household level, confirms that the relationship between development and migration is far from straightforward.[9] Conditions and events that spur migration in one context may have no effect in another. Indeed, it is the interaction of various factors and conditions rather than any one variable alone that motivates people to migrate.

The effect of employment on an individual's decision to migrate is an illustrative example. While employment has been shown to decrease the probability an individual will migrate in some contexts,[10] in others it appears to increase the likelihood of migration.[11] These disparate findings suggest that employment plays a different role in different societies: where migration aspirations exist for reasons other than necessity (e.g., to facilitate upward mobility or gain prestige) but the costs are prohibitive, employment may enable individuals to migrate by providing access to the necessary financial resources; conversely, where the potential benefits of migration are lower or the risks higher, employment may discourage an individual from migrating by providing a sustainable livelihood locally.

In other words, while many factors can contribute to an individual's decision to migrate, no factor operates in a vacuum; broad social and economic forces shape the role and the weight such factors take on when it comes to migrant decision-making. Broadly, the following three sets of dynamics tend to interact to influence migration patterns.[12]

A. Are Attractive Opportunities Available Locally?

Whether an individual aspires to move is influenced by both the local availability of opportunities for work and personal fulfillment (e.g., education or professional advancement) *and* perceptions of the desirability of these opportunities compared to alternatives, such as migration.

Migration can be an important way to manage risk. Conflict, environmental change, and economic conditions may limit the ability of households to earn a living or plan for the future. When this happens, households may adapt their livelihood strategies. Depending on the context, migration to another city, a neighboring country, or further abroad may be the seen as the best way to diversify the household's means of support. Research in areas where economic activity is primarily agricultural, for example, suggests that migration may at times serve as a way to mitigate risks associated with changing environmental conditions (e.g., crop failure) and a dearth of other local opportunities.[13] A 2017 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) provided further evidence of the role migration plays as a risk management strategy.[14] Based on a ten-country survey, the study found that individuals without stable work (through a formal employment contract) and access to social safety net policies were more likely to migrate than those with the increased level of security that steady work and welfare policies offer.

Similarly, violence and conflict can have a clear impact on the economic rationale for migrating if,[15] for example, it results in the destruction of important economic assets or the death of household members. Once households are no longer able to adapt to these pressures through local means, migration may become the only remaining option. For example, Somali refugees have reported in interviews that they or their families first tried to cope locally with conflict, only moving once their means to do so had been destroyed.[16]

Legal and institutional constraints, as well as discrimination, can also interfere with the ability of individuals and households to earn a sustainable living. Refugees in first-asylum countries, for example, often face constraints on their legal right to work, enroll in school, or move outside of specified geographic areas.[17] Rather than remain in legal and economic limbo, they may decide that moving onward to seek protection in another country is the only way to secure legal status, access employment or education, and thus achieve a level of stability.

In many contexts, community and household perceptions of local versus international economic conditions and of the desirability of local livelihoods relative to those that could be achieved through migration are just as important as these "absolute constraints." In some communities, young adults may see migration as necessary to advance their personal or economic status, particularly where local livelihoods are viewed as dead-end jobs or as carrying low status. In Cambodia, for example, a 2015 report found that because livelihoods in the local community were seen as "high-risk, passive, unprofitable, and low-status," migrating for work was perceived to be a smart investment.[18] Similarly, a 2017 study examining trends in the migration of unaccompanied youth from Central America found that emigration was highest in areas experiencing persistent economic depression, while short-term economic shocks had little effect on such trends.[19] This suggests that general optimism or pessimism about the livelihood opportunities a local economy will offer in the future can be an important part of migration decisions. Moreover, migration can sometimes be undertaken as a proactive tool to secure a better future, rather than as a reactive response to acute economic or physical insecurity at present.

B. Does a Migration Corridor Already Exist?

Aspiring to migrate, and then actually moving, depends on potential migrants' awareness of the migration opportunities available to them, why these opportunities are desirable, and how to act on them. Indeed, a number of studies have concluded that connections between would-be migrants and friends or family who have already moved abroad are the strongest predictor of migration—more so than local economic or agricultural conditions, or other individual characteristics.[20]

Living in an area with a high rate of emigration or in a household that already has members abroad has been found to increase the likelihood that someone will *desire* to move.[21] Family and friends with migration experience and connections to others living in the diaspora can serve as important sources of information about opportunities abroad and how to reach them. As previous emigrants share their successes and experiences, they may (inadvertently or intentionally) encourage others to seek similar gains through emigration. In addition, family and friends at home often play an active role in making migration decisions and planning journeys, particularly in communities where emigration has come to be viewed as a way to improve the social or economic status of an entire household.[22]

In addition, connections with persons who have previously migrated can increase the likelihood that an individual *will actually* move.[23] Family members or friends can serve as facilitators by providing financing (through remittances) or information on travel and employment opportunities to those contemplating departure. Once a route has been established, it may become easier for others to follow. One study of potential migrants in Sri Lanka, conducted over the course of a year, found that those who had family abroad were the most likely to follow through on their desire to migrate.[24]

The influential role of individuals with migration experience in motivating and enabling others to follow suggests that once emigration becomes an established practice in a community, it is likely to continue.

C. Are Would-be Migrants Able and Willing to Cover the Costs of Migration?

Perhaps most importantly, individuals and households must have the means to move. Migration is a costly endeavor. Expenses can include documentation and visa fees; the cost of travel; and service rates charged by labor recruiters, immigration lawyers, or smugglers (where legal avenues are not available). The extent to which individuals have access to the financial resources necessary to cover these costs is a major determinant of whether they will be able to move, regardless of the intensity of their aspirations.

Potential migrants often cite costs as one of the top reasons why they have not yet migrated.[25] Moreover, research suggests that members of wealthier households are more likely to move than those whose families have few financial resources—confirmation of the existence of a migration hump at a household level.[26] Even in conflict conditions, financial capital can determine the ability of an individual or family to flee. Households that are unable to pay for transportation, travel documents, or smugglers' fees are often unable to leave to seek safety elsewhere.[27] For example, in Central American municipalities with lower levels of poverty, families have been shown to be more likely and able to send their children abroad when faced with an increase in violence.[28]

Costs can also influence how far people are able to travel and how they choose to get there. Households with fewer financial resources are likely to send migrants shorter distances, perhaps within the same country, to find work; international migration, on the other hand, is often only an option for households that are relatively better off.[29] The information and beliefs potential migrants have about the costs of the journey (regardless of whether that information is accurate) may also affect decisions about whether to move. One study of potential migrants in Ethiopia found that moving irregularly was seen as a cheaper option than legal labor migration to reach a similar end, most often employment in the Gulf, and thus was preferred by most of those who aspired to move.[30]

IV. The Policy Implications of a More Nuanced Migration-Development Narrative

The belief that development is a solution for unwanted migration informs the way many governments in high-income countries have responded to rising unauthorized and mixed migration flows. Within the European context, this can be seen in the establishment of trust funds and development plans targeted at the regions from or through which significant numbers of migrants and refugees travel. These programs have tended to focus on developing local livelihoods and improving public services, often alongside support to alleviate food and income insecurity. For example, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa introduced in 2015 offers support for projects that "boost socio-economic development" by enhancing employment opportunities, supporting education and vocational training, and providing financing for small and medium-sized enterprises.[31] Similarly, the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (also known as the Madad Fund) has committed 33 percent of its approximately 1 billion euros to livelihoods projects in countries neighboring Syria, in addition to funding for more traditional humanitarian support measures.[32]

Yet the complexity of the relationship between migration and development trends suggests that the effects of development policies on migration flows are likely to be similarly nuanced. Little specific research has, however, been done to date on whether and to what extent development policies reshape migration patterns, and very few development interventions monitor migration outcomes in their evaluations.[33] At a country level, greater spending on development assistance does not necessarily appear to reduce migration. Several studies examining the relationship between aid and migration have found that development assistance, broadly defined, is correlated with higher levels of emigration,[34] though the reasons underpinning this trend remain unclear. Other studies have, however, concluded that the effects of aid on migration are insignificant.[35]

Given the highly variable nature of migration, however, exactly how a particular policy affects flows is likely to be dependent on the local context. The limited research that has been done on the effects of different development and livelihood programs suggests the following four broad factors are likely to shape how such interventions interact with migration.

A. The Role of Migration in the Local Context

The role migration plays in local economies and communities varies considerably from location to location. Most people do not migrate internationally; just 3 percent of the world's population lives outside their country of birth.[36] And among those who do choose to move, some households may do so as a last-resort response to absolute constraints on their ability to earn a living or plan for the future (e.g., refugees in a first-asylum country where they have no right to work), while others may do so to earn capital to invest at home. Because experience with migration is the single most significant predictor of future migration,[37] the details of a country or community's migration history is likely to influence how a particular development intervention will affect migration patterns.

Microfinance initiatives illustrate this point. Some development projects offer small-scale loans and financial products, known collectively as microcredit, with the aim of facilitating the inclusion of poor communities in the financial system by addressing their lack of access to more traditional financial institutions.[38] While microfinance has been used in pursuit of many goals, it is often seen as a way for poor households to obtain the capital they need to develop or expand sustainable livelihood strategies by, for example, opening a business or investing in new technologies—possibly creating local alternatives to migration. Yet a growing body of research has provided evidence that in societies with an established history of migration, some households use microcredit to finance further migration.[39] A 2014 qualitative study in Cambodia offered insights into the reasons behind this phenomenon;[40] the prevalent use of loans to finance migration, it explains, is a result of the lack of sustainable opportunities for local investment. While microfinance institutions increased the availability of credit, they did not concurrently create opportunities to use that credit in low-risk and consistently profitable ways. Residents thus fell back on migration as the surest way to obtain a profitable return on their loans.

The experiences of microfinance programs in Cambodia and elsewhere illustrate the importance of understanding why migration occurs in a particular context, in order to anticipate possible interactions between development interventions and long-standing migration dynamics. When microfinance was provided to help individuals overcome credit constraints that hamper investment in local livelihood strategies and prompt migration, expanding credit alone did not have the desired effect. Other interlocking factors—the lack of a market for products, businesses' low profit margins, and environmental risks—continued to make local livelihoods less appealing compared with the opportunities available through emigration. Correctly identifying the full range of reasons migration is occurring in a particular context is thus critical to designing interventions that influence how and whether it continues to occur.

B. Creating Assets Versus Creating Opportunities

Many of the projects launched recently as part of efforts to address root causes seek to improve conditions for potential migrants in origin and transit countries by increasing migrants' livelihood assets.[41] Among the long list of projects funded by the EU Trust Fund for Africa are vocational training and business development programs that provide beneficiaries with new skills, knowledge, and financial resources with the aim of facilitating their success in local markets. What such efforts often neglect to take into account, however, is precisely what the Cambodian experience with microfinance programs has demonstrated: whether sustainable opportunities exist for would-be migrants to use these new assets locally.

Indeed, the limited evidence that does exist on the impact of livelihood interventions suggests that in high-migration contexts, improving assets without also creating opportunities to use these assets may facilitate rather than curb migration. As with microcredit, increasing household financial assets could end up simply removing barriers to costly migration journeys if households have little hope that their local prospects will improve. For example, in some areas where migration was already an established livelihood strategy, cash transfers to poor families were correlated with an increase in emigration.[42] Similarly, some studies have identified a correlation between the provision of agricultural subsidies and an increase in emigration in certain countries.[43] The effects of subsidies may differ according to whether agriculture is primarily subsistence or commercial;[44] in areas with subsistence farming, households may use the subsidy to diversify their income by funding the migration of certain members of the family, while households in areas with a commercial farming sector may invest the subsidies in new assets to increase productivity. Again, the extent to which local opportunities exist to profitably invest the funds granted is crucial.

A similar pattern can be observed between education programs and migration. Higher levels of educational attainment have consistently been correlated with a greater probability of migration in many countries.[45] Along these lines, studies examining the effects of training and education interventions on migration have found evidence that where the beneficiaries of such programs do not have opportunities to use the skills they gain locally after the conclusion of the program, they may actually be more likely to want to migrate than before.[46] A longitudinal study in Nepal into the impact of economic opportunities and human-capital endowments, for example, found that better access to education in childhood increased the probability that an individual would migrate, while more economic and educational opportunities in adulthood decreased their likelihood of moving.[47]

Such findings suggest that it is important for programs to consider not just what assets beneficiaries lack, but whether there are sufficient opportunities to put them to use once acquired.[48] If not, programs that increase assets (and particularly financial assets) without improving opportunities may run the risk of removing barriers to migration without reducing the incentives to migrate. Indeed, this suggests that interventions that aim to lower migration incentives may do better to focus on creating opportunities that can serve as viable alternatives to migration—more specifically, to unsafe or disorderly migration—rather than on increasing individuals' productive assets.[49]

C. Distinguishing Between Short- and Long-Term Effects

While political leaders and policymakers in donor countries may be focused on the next election cycle, the effects of development and livelihood policies can take decades to accrue, including in the area of migration. Moreover, the impact of these policies can differ substantially in the short, medium, and long term. The concept of a migration hump at the country or regional level even suggests that these effects could point in different directions, with policies that successfully promote development increasing migration in the short term, but potentially decreasing it much farther in the future as development continues.

At an individual level, the impact of education interventions illustrates this variability over time. For example, evaluations of programs in Mexico, Nepal, and Tanzania in which the receipt of cash transfers was conditional on children attending school found evidence that attendance requirements lower migration rates in the short term, with students and their families opting to remain where they were to continue receiving the funds.[50] In the long term, however, the deterrent effect of enrollment requirements disappeared as children completed or aged out of school. Indeed, in Tanzania beneficiaries of the cash transfer program reported moving as soon as they finished school.[51] Similarly, evaluations of a school improvement program in the Philippines found that several years after its completion, migration rates were higher among graduates of the improved schools than among those who did not benefit from the program.[52] The effects ascribed to an intervention are thus likely to differ depending on whether one considers their immediate consequences or longer-term outcomes.

D. Who Benefits from Development Programs

Finally, while development projects launched by European donors since the 2015–16 refugee and migration crisis have had the explicit aim of reducing the drive to migrate, these efforts do not always have a clear focus on who should be targeted within a country of origin or how.[53] This is a crucial gap as the results of development and livelihoods interventions are likely to differ depending on who benefits from them and in what ways.

Research on the effects of vocational education and training illustrates this tension. A 2017 study by the OECD observed that beneficiaries of such programs were more likely to migrate than those who did not receive training in seven of the nine countries examined.[54] In these seven countries, higher educational attainment was correlated across the broader national population with an increased likelihood to migrate. Because the training on offer primarily targeted low-skilled individuals, these programs inadvertently added to the pool of mid-skilled would-be migrants. In Armenia and Cambodia, however, where highly skilled individuals were less likely to seek to migrate than those with fewer skills, participation in training lowered individuals' migration intentions.

Stated simply, migrants are usually those members of a community who have relatively more resources—at least sufficient resources to finance a move. Development programs implemented at the individual level, though, often target the poorest individuals and households with the aim of alleviating some of the severest forms of poverty. And while the eradication of extreme poverty has long been a development goal, projects that are successful in this regard may also create new potential migrants, while doing little to decrease incentives for those who already want to move.

V. Conclusions

The relationship between development conditions and migration patterns is both complex and context specific. Indeed, the most accurate answer that can be given to the question of how development policies are likely to affect migration is "it depends." An array of factors interact to determine how individuals make decisions about whether to move as well as how broader societal migration patterns evolve, each of which will shape the impact of development policies and programming that aim to manage migration. Perhaps most important for policymakers with such aims in mind, the long- and short-term effects of development are likely to differ, with little evidence that development processes or interventions will lead to a decline in emigration rates in the short term—though they may on a longer timeline.

Broadly, policymakers may want to reconsider the wisdom of employing development policies to achieve the object of restricting migration, as both migration and development experts have been quick to point out.[55] At a minimum, development programs will need to be tailored with a much closer eye to the local context and the specific needs of those who are most likely to move. Programming developed with short-term, migration-management priorities in mind will inevitably look different than initiatives designed primarily to serve development goals; it also runs a strong risk of undermining the core goals of most development cooperation policies—alleviating poverty and creating stable societies. Neglecting these goals may spur more migration in both the short and the long term.

The tension between the short-term imperatives of migration management and the long-term objectives of development cooperation may never be fully resolved. Yet it may be possible to find common ground. Investments that focus on creating opportunities or reducing risk by adjusting broad economic and governance structures may be more effective than efforts to change migration incentives at an individual or household level. Such efforts also leave open the possibility of working with, rather than against, existing migration trends. Mobility has long been a critical adaptation strategy for populations facing economic and environmental pressures in many regions, and remittances and the transfer of skills and knowledge earned abroad have been shown to have concrete development benefits in origin countries. To maximize these benefits, policymakers may want to consider how to reshape, rather than prevent, current migration flows by exploring ways to open alternative migration possibilities that are safe and legal. For example, the fact that much of migration from origin countries is intraregional suggests the potential promise of investing in both local and regional opportunity structures and mobility—a strategy that may prove more realistic than efforts to discourage people from moving at all. Ultimately, achieving success may require a rethink of how success itself is defined.

Endnotes

1 UN General Assembly, "Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," October 21, 2015, www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

2 "Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 Establishing a Financing Instrument for Development Cooperation for the Period 2014-2020," *Official Journal of the European Union* 2014 L77/44, March 15, 2014, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A32014R0233&rid=1.

3 This conceptualization of migration has its origin in traditional economic models of migration, which predict that migrants respond rationally to incentives and constraints in origin and destination countries when choosing whether or not to move. For an overview of relevant theories of international migration, see Douglas Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, and Adela Pellegrino, *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

4 European Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions: A European Agenda on Migration" (COM [2015] 240 final, May 13, 2015), https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf. EU cooperation with partner countries has, however, often taken on elements of conditionality, with the receipt of aid made contingent on certain behaviors desired by EU policymakers. While conditionality was originally developed to encourage countries to adopt practices that promoted human rights or good governance that would improve the outcomes of the linked aid interventions—called "positive conditionality"—more recent efforts have instead used aid to incentivize partner countries to cooperate in accepting the return of their nationals from EU Member States or in securing their borders to reduce further outflows, known as "negative conditionality." For an in-depth discussion on the use of conditionality in EU migration and development policies, see Elizabeth Collett and Aliyyah Ahad, *EU Migration Partnerships: A Work in Progress* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2017), www.migrationpolicy.org/research/eu-migration-partnerships-work-progress.

5 See, for example, World Bank Group, Migration and Development: *A Role for the World Bank Group* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2016), http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/468881473870347506/Migration-and-Development-Report-Sept2016.pdf.

6 United Nations General Assembly, "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants," October 3, 2016, www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1. Also within the UN space, the International Labor Office (ILO) Fair Migration Agenda prioritizes creating opportunities for "orderly and fair migration." See ILO, "Fair Migration: Setting an ILO Agenda" (Report of the Director-General, Report 1B, International Labor Conference, 103rd Session, ILO, Geneva, 2014), www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_242879.pdf.

7 UN General Assembly, "New York Declaration."

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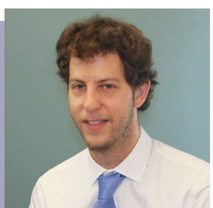

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