

UNDERSTANDING CHARACTERISTICS, CAUSES, AND CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION

Contributions from the CGIAR Research Program on
Policies, Institutions, and Markets



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It is estimated that nearly one in seven people – more than 1 billion in total – are classified as migrants in national statistics. Of these, about 763 million are estimated to be internal migrants; the remaining 281 million are international migrants (International Organization for Migration 2021). Migration is an intrinsic part of the development process, representing one of the greatest opportunities to facilitate economic and social advancement in developing countries. Understanding how different types of individuals and households perceive these opportunities and overcome related constraints, and how these change over time, is of key interest. At the same time, migration presents one of the world's biggest challenges, requiring adjustments by both sending and hosting communities, and understanding those adjustments is a priority.

The CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets (PIM) has undertaken more than 40 studies designed to explore the causes and consequences of internal and international migration. In aggregate, the studies help us understand what motivates people to migrate and what factors impinge on their ability to do so. These studies focused on the relationship of migration with rural transformation, gender, youth, climate change, and social protection and cut across the whole PIM research portfolio. This brief synthesizes findings from this research in an at-

tempt to present a more complete picture. While there is a vast literature on migration external to PIM and CGIAR, the results of the PIM investigations constitute valuable inputs into national policies and programs designed to foster economic and social development while maximizing the benefits and reducing the risks of migration.

Here are some of the questions we asked:

- What have we learned about the dynamics of migration?
- What are the main drivers of migration?
- How does migration affect migrants' welfare?
- What are the impacts of migration on sending communities?
- What are the impacts of migration on host communities?

While looking into those questions, we paid specific attention to how gender and youth status influence the drivers, impacts, and dynamics of migration, and what policies could help extend its benefits and reduce its costs.

What have we learned about the dynamics of migration?

Migration patterns can be highly variable and complex. In the following sections, we present

findings on different patterns of migration (e.g., source and destination locations) and show that the well-known rural-to-urban pattern of migration is not the only important dynamic, and others, such as rural-to-rural migration, can play a bigger role.



Migration is more complicated than rural-to-urban movement

In most developing countries, migration consists predominantly of people moving from rural to urban areas in pursuit of economic opportunity, but several PIM studies reveal other common patterns of migration. [Mueller et al. \(2020b\)](#) calculated that about 10 percent of urban and rural households from East Africa migrate on a temporary basis (for 12 months or less). [Mueller et al. \(2019\)](#) find that in Tanzania, rates of rural migration to peri-urban areas are in fact higher than that of rural migration to urban areas, and rates of peri-urban to urban migration are triple those of rural-to-urban migration. They find that, lacking job experience and social networks, young people moving to urban destinations are more likely to be unemployed than if they remained in their home areas. However, migrants who were successful in finding a job over the two-year period of the study showed a tendency to transition from agriculture to non-agricultural employment. Moreover, a study in Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, and Tanzania ([Mueller and Lee 2019](#)) shows that only a small share of rural youth migrate

to urban areas. Far more youth are likely to migrate between rural areas, and often their main reasons for doing so are not work-related. For young men, rural-rural migration is often motivated by education or household relocation (e.g., forming a new household or moving with one's family), while for women, rural-rural migration is often for marriage. Similarly, a study by [Kosec et al. \(2018\)](#) in Ethiopia found that 38 percent of youth who permanently migrated from rural areas went to other rural areas. The importance of rural-rural migration is echoed in a study in Pakistan ([Mueller, Gray, and Kosec 2014](#)) that identifies heat stress on crops – causing both farm and nonfarm income reduction – as a critical driver of this type of migration.

[Cattaneo and Robinson \(2020\)](#), in their study of internal migration in 31 countries, show that rural-rural migration is especially dominant in late transforming countries such as those of sub-Saharan Africa, while urban-to-urban migration becomes more common in higher income countries. They also find sizable urban-to-rural migration flows, with rural returnees often contributing substantially to these flows. And many migrants move multiple times: in the sample of countries, at least 43 percent of men and 36 percent of women who moved once moved a second time (or more). Finally, a study of urbanization and structural transformation in Ethiopia ([Schmidt et al. 2020](#)) shows that the share of Ethiopian migrants moving from one district to another is increasing: migrants grew from 11 percent of the population in 1984 to 17 percent of the population in 2008. Almost half of the migrants in 2008 migrated from one rural area to another, and 27 percent of migrants moved from a rural to an urban area. Similar to findings in other studies, men most commonly moved for work, whereas women most commonly moved for marriage.

We are learning to predict who will migrate

The rapid growth of international migration over the past two decades has raised interest in identifying the root causes of outmigration and the

population groups most likely to emigrate. However, anticipating migration is complex: the decision to migrate is often determined by multiple interrelated, but often unobservable, push and pull factors. [Ceballos and Hernandez \(2020\)](#) have proposed a Migration Propensity Index (MPI), which uses a reduced set of household-level indicators to assess the likelihood that one or more individuals from a given household will emigrate. The MPI is concise, easy to implement, and statistically rigorous, and it avoids asking direct, sensitive questions about migration attempts or intentions, which are prone to elicit refusals or underreporting. The index was calibrated to data for Guatemala, and the resulting model correctly identifies 93 percent of eventual emigrating and non-emigrating households. The MPI can help policymakers better understand drivers of migration, monitor present and expected migratory flows, and target economic and social policies.



Young migrants often move out of agriculture

The 2019 IFPRI book [Youth and Jobs in Rural Africa: Beyond Stylized Facts](#) includes several studies of youth migration in Africa in the context of employment. Analyses of young migrants in Malawi and Tanzania ([Mueller and Lee 2019](#)) show that rural-to-urban migration facilitates movement out of agriculture for youth, usually into higher-return

activities. A study of youth mobility in Senegal ([Estruch et al. 2019](#)) finds that many Senegalese youth are leaving rural areas altogether, and more migrate either to urban areas or abroad than to other rural areas, particularly those who are better educated and wealthier. The least-educated youth from the poorest households are more likely to migrate to another rural area to find employment in the nonfarm economy. Youth who exit agriculture by migrating internally are most likely to become self-employed in the nonfarm economy in urban areas.

What are the main drivers of migration?

People migrate for many reasons, but in general these relate to pursuit of economic opportunities, education, or marriage. Push factors (such as climate shocks and fluctuations, lack of land, fewer jobs in agriculture, or a declining local economy) and pull factors (such as fast-growing urban economies) influence the decision-making process. For effective policies and programs, it is useful to distinguish the factors that drive migration, and PIM's research has clarified the range and importance of these factors in different contexts.

Individual characteristics are strong determinants of migration

A [study](#) by de Brauw (2019b) on rural youth migration in the period between two surveys in five developing countries (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Tanzania) finds that individual characteristics, such as age, gender, and education, are more important determinants of migration than household (such as family size, gender of head) or village (population density, land per capita, vegetation index) characteristics. For example, more-educated men and women are more likely to migrate (largely internally) in all five countries studied. While more-educated individuals may migrate from rural areas, it is also the case that pursuit of higher education is a strong motivator for migration ([Rufai et al. 2019](#)).

Drivers of migration differ between women and men

Several PIM studies offer insights into how migration decisions and patterns differ between men and women. In Nigeria, [Rufai et al. \(2019\)](#) find that, for male migrants, education and employment were the major reasons for migrating, whereas most of the women migrated for marriage and education. In Ethiopia, [Kosec et al. \(2018\)](#) show that access to land influences the employment and migration decisions of young rural men but not young rural women. Finally, in Kyrgyzstan, [Kosec et al. \(2021\)](#) find that when confronted with income shocks, women are less likely to migrate and more likely to increase weekly hours of work at the origin than men.

Migrant networks can play an important role

While in many cases education is a strong driver of migration, a study from Pakistan ([Chen, Kosec, and Mueller 2019](#)) reveals interesting nuances. It investigates the role of education and networks in determining choices between temporary and long-term migration. Having a tertiary education increases the likelihood of permanent migration, while having a secondary education increases the likelihood of temporary migration, but only for those with weak migrant networks. Networks provide greater assistance for permanent migration, where job search costs tend to be higher. But in the presence of moderate to dense networks, workers with more education are actually less likely to move, indicating that networks can both draw high-ability types and dissuade the highly educated (by alerting them to low elasticity of demand for skilled workers at destinations).

Social protection programs have differential effects on migration by men and women

An evaluation of Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) ([Hoddinott and Mekasha 2017](#)) shows that participation in the program's

public works component leads to an increase in the number of girls between the ages of 12 and 18 years who stay home but does not affect migration decisions by men of any age or adult women in participant households. In Mali, a study of effects of a cash transfer program ([Hidrobo et al. 2021](#)) finds that the probability of rural-rural migration among men in beneficiary households increases, while the probability of rural-to-urban migration among women decreases slightly. This difference is likely attributable to the reasons why men and women migrate, with marriage being particularly important for women. In a study in Zambia, [Mueller et al. \(2020a\)](#) examine the extent to which receipt of a cash transfer affects the use of migration as an adaptation strategy to climate extremes. Having access to cash transfers doubles the rate of men's short-distance moves during periods of relatively higher cool temperatures, irrespective of wealth, but during extreme heat, cash transfers reduced men's migration among less-poor households. Under normal climate conditions, cash transfers positively spur long-distance migration in the long term. Women's migration probabilities were unaffected by cash transfers.

Reasons behind youth migration include lack of access to land and pursuit of education

Studies in Ethiopia ([Kosec et al. 2018](#)) and Nigeria ([Ghebru et al. 2018, 2019](#)) find that land inheritance and access to land play a significant role in influencing employment and migration decisions of rural youth. The more land young people expect to inherit or have access to, the lower the probability that they will migrate and be employed in the non-agriculture sector. These studies also find that the relationship between land access or inheritance and migration is affected by other mediating factors: land inheritance is a stronger predictor of rural-to-urban permanent migration and non-agriculture-sector employment for less-educated youth in areas with less vibrant land markets, in relatively remote areas

(far from major urban centers), and in areas with lower soil quality.

A study ([Heckert 2015](#)) in Haiti that investigated the characteristics of the rural youth who migrate to urban areas finds that youth motives and remittances behavior differ from those of older adults. Youth migrate to urban areas mainly for better education opportunities and many families continue to financially support the education of these young migrants as a way to diversify household risk over an extended period.



Household factors and migration – a complicated story

Several household factors hypothesized to influence migration decisions have been analyzed in PIM studies. In contrast to other recent literature, the study of seven countries by de Brauw (2019b) finds little evidence that credit constraints are correlated with migration, holding other things constant.

Although migration is traditionally seen as being driven by households' efforts to maximize their absolute income, perceptions of relative well-being or deprivation may also play a role. One study ([Kafle et al. 2020](#)) used data from Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda to show that households' migration deci-

sions are based not only on their absolute level of well-being but also on the relative position of households in the well-being distribution of their home community. Households that are relatively deprived – that is, worse off relative to other households in their community – are more likely to produce migrants. Furthermore, the effect of relative deprivation on migration is amplified in rural, agricultural, and male-headed households. That individuals who feel relatively deprived experience greater motivation to expand their income – including through women entering the labor force – has been documented in Papua New Guinea through a randomized priming experiment ([Kosec et al. 2021](#)). On the other hand, the study of de Brauw (2019b) found that relative deprivation was not a significant motivator of migration. These differences may partly be explained by different methodological approaches and what other factors were accounted for in the analysis. Clearly, understanding the fundamental reasons behind migration choices of large samples of households is fraught with challenges. Policies designed to reduce rural-to-urban migration through rural development and transformation programs should use caution; if such policies do not take distribution issues into account, they can increase economic inequality, further increasing migration flows.

Climate events causing migration vary by country

Several regional studies highlight that climate events have varying effects on migration and show how these effects differ across age, sex, and socioeconomic groups. [Thiede et al. \(2016\)](#) tested several models and data measurement methods in eight countries in South America, finding that monthly temperature shocks have the most consistent effect on interprovince migration relative to monthly rainfall shocks and gradual changes in climate over a multiyear period. Results of this study are significant for both men and women with no difference across age. Another study, conducted in northern Latin America and the

Caribbean ([Baez et al. 2016](#)), finds that droughts have a more significant impact on individuals' decisions to migrate than hurricanes and that young people are the most likely to migrate within rural areas. A case study in Bangladesh ([Chen and Mueller 2018](#)) finds that increasing soil salinity triggers greater internal migration and economic diversification into aquaculture than does flooding. On the other hand, a study in Tanzania ([Hirvonen 2016](#)) shows that income-induced shocks caused by rising temperatures can inhibit long-term migration which is costly, preventing non-wealthy households from seizing the opportunities offered by geographic mobility. These findings show that climate and environmental stresses can act both as a driver (increased motivation to migrate) and as an inhibitor (reduced ability to migrate) to individuals and households' decision to migrate.

Climate-driven migration affects labor markets

Two PIM studies investigated the impact of climate-driven internal migration on labor markets in developing countries. Mueller et al. (2020a) examine the impact of climate variability on temporary migration and labor markets in urban and rural areas in East Africa. They find that an increase in temperature anomalies reduces the temporary migration of urban workers and has no effect on rural workers. Analysis of the relationships between

labor participation in various rural and urban sectors suggests the impact of climate disruption on employment opportunities may be affecting the expected benefits of migration. As a result, the immobility of workers in urban areas during high temperatures coincides with higher unemployment. Similarly, another study ([Mueller et al. 2020b](#)) finds that high temperatures decrease mobility in Botswana, and high precipitation decreases migration in Botswana and Kenya but increases it in Zambia. Low inactivity and low unemployment associated with moderate increases in precipitation in Zambia indicate migration is likely responding to pull factors when climatic conditions are favorable for wage labor. There were no discernible effects of climate on employment in Kenya, where this was also tested.

Adaptation to climate change may reduce migration

A persistent concern about the social consequences of climate change is that large, vulnerable populations will be involuntarily displaced. But how might the relationship between climate extremes and migration evolve over time? A study by [Gray et al. \(2020\)](#) linked longitudinal data from 20,000 Chinese adults from 1989 to 2011 with data on climate anomalies to explore how climatic effects on internal migration have changed. At the beginning of the study period, temperature anomalies led people to migrate permanently from rural to urban areas, but by the end of the study period, this effect had been reversed. Analysis suggests that non-agricultural livelihood activities may have become more vulnerable to climate extremes, and thus there may be fewer opportunities for work in the manufacturing and urban sectors that attract permanent climate migrants. At the same time, agricultural households have gained more tools for crop adaptation and livelihood diversification in the face of environmental shocks. It could be that as climate change unfolds, development and in situ adaptation will allow climate-induced migration to decline over time.



Conflict may lead to migration, but not always

Conflict was a major reason for the increasing flow of migrants from Central America starting in the 1980s. A survey of the literature on migration from Central America and on remittances from those migrants shows that since the 1960s this flow of emigrants has evolved from small numbers of largely intraregional emigrants to substantial numbers of people emigrating from the region, in large part to the United States ([Ambler 2019](#)). By 2000, for example, 88 percent of Salvadoran emigrants in the world lived in the United States. Beyond the brutal civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, migration was also driven by limited economic opportunity and by natural disasters.

However, while widespread conflict can result in migration within and outside a country, a study of the impact of conflict in Mali ([Masset et al. 2019](#)), for example, finds that protracted conflict in the Mopti region of Mali in 2012 did not result in large migration flows through 2017. This finding conforms with observations from other studies, which find that economically better-off and more educated populations are more likely to migrate to urban areas and abroad, whereas people residing in extremely deprived areas lack the resources to travel and the skills to start economic activities in new places. The study also suggests that modest support in the form of food aid can reduce migration outflows from conflict areas.

How does migration affect migrant's welfare?

In addition to potentially bringing more wealth, how does migration affect those who choose this path?

More money and better diets

Studies of several countries find that migrants' welfare often improves in a number of ways. A study of how migration changes the nature of tra-

ditional institutions in rural communities in Tanzania ([De Weerd and Hirvonen 2016](#)) shows that even if migrants limit their own consumption to help family members in their home villages, they end up twice as rich as non-migrants. A study of effects of internal migration on overall well-being in Ethiopia ([de Brauw et al. 2018](#)) finds that migrants' nonfood consumption rises by at least 145 percent, and that they also have improved diets relative to non-migrants. Gains are larger for men and for migrants who have been away for longer periods.

Quality of life, sense of well-being, and health

Migration does not occur without costs, however. A study of the horticulture sector in Senegal ([Fabry et al. 2020](#)) looks at the quality of employment for vulnerable workers, including migrants, women, and youth, in agro-industry and small-scale farms, based on wages and a "decent work index." As a cohort, migrants earn higher wages in the horticulture sector, but they experience lower job quality (they work longer hours, nights, and weekends) than local workers. A longitudinal study in Pakistan ([Chen et al. 2019](#)) reveals that, despite achieving significant gains in consumption (35–40 percent increase compared with non-migrants), migrants experience a deterioration in subjective well-being. They are less likely to report being happy or in excellent health and more likely to report having been sick recently. The results suggest that deteriorating physical health coupled with feelings of stress and relative deprivation underlie the disparity between objective and subjective well-being. Another source of perceived unhappiness is the gap between what individuals wish to achieve and what they actually achieve – the aspirations gap. If traditional market mechanisms cannot reduce psychological stresses, a more constructive measure may be to address regional inequality by shifting production – rather than workers – across space. For example, policies that remove barriers to leaving their homes (e.g., land use regulations)

or expand opportunities in secondary towns (and not only major cities) (e.g., rural revitalization and road construction efforts in these communities) could be ways in which the public sector balances migrants' desires to earn more while allowing them to remain at least relatively close to home.

Returning migrants may also experience lower subjective well-being. A study conducted in Tanzania ([Hirvonen and Lilleør 2014](#)) finds that migrants who return home mostly do so because of poor job market outcomes (for men) or ended marriages (for women). They report suffering from chronic illness and no welfare gains from their migration experience.

Two other studies examine impacts of rural-to-urban migration on health and diets of young migrants in Haiti. [Heckert \(2016\)](#) investigates the impact of migration on youth sexual and reproductive health and shows that migration to urban areas causes boys and girls to experience first sex later compared with non-migrants, but migration also prevents them from accumulating adequate sexual protective knowledge. Another study ([Heckert et al. 2015](#)) finds that youth who migrate to urban areas consume more high-sugar beverages and food snacks than their peers in rural areas.

What are the impacts of migration on sending communities?

Remittances benefit migrants' communities of origin through investment and education

For households, communities, and countries that send migrants, remittances constitute crucial economic benefits. Although policymakers have long feared that migration from rural areas reduces agricultural production in sending communities, a literature review ([de Brauw 2019a](#)) of studies on the effects of migration on agricultural production and other outcomes covering several developing countries finds that, by and large, migration does not reduce agricultural produc-

tion. To reduce the impact of lost labor, households adjust one or more factors, such as hiring of labor or using labor saving technology such as machine rental. Furthermore, through remittances, migration can lead to investments that may go toward agriculture, non-agriculture, or human capital, depending on the relative local returns to these areas of investment.

One study in El Salvador looked at the links between migration and educational attainment through migrant remittances ([Ambler et al. 2015](#)). In an experiment, Salvadoran migrants were offered matching funds for educational remittances – that is, funds they sent toward the education of a beneficiary student of their choice in El Salvador would be matched. The matches led to increased educational expenditures and increased private school attendance. The study found substantial “crowd-in” of educational investments: for each \$1 received by beneficiaries, educational expenditures increased by \$3.72. These findings could guide policies aimed at increasing the development impact of remittances through the design of specific remittance-related programs to encourage investment in education in migrant-origin countries.



A study by [de Brauw and Giles \(2018\)](#) shows that internal migration in China boosted per capita consumption of durable and nondurable goods by households remaining in migrant-sending

communities; these effects are stronger for poorer households within those communities. In addition, migration is associated with more investment in non-agricultural production in migrant-sending communities, but these investments are concentrated among the more affluent households. Another study in China shows that, in terms of nutrition, migration may have positive effects on the weight of the migrants' children, though no significant effect on their height was observed ([Mu and de Brauw 2013](#)). The study provides evidence indicating that the improvement in weight may result from increased access to tap water in migrant households and consequent health effects, thanks to additional income from migration.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder that patterns of migration and remittance flows are subject to shocks. Restrictions on labor mobility coupled with a slowing economy during the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the normal flow of remittances. In Myanmar, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in sharp drops in this type of income. According to a national community survey in Myanmar conducted in June and July 2020 ([Lambrecht et al. 2020](#)), mobility restrictions and job losses led many domestic and international migrants to return home, resulting in lost income. With the easing of mobility restrictions, men and women started to migrate again domestically but not internationally.

Migration causes adjustments in labor and may affect wages for women and men

The effects of emigration on labor markets – and particularly wage rates – in the source economy have been understudied. Using data from Mon State in Myanmar, [Filipski et al. \(2020\)](#) estimate that the extent of emigration has caused a significant upward pressure on wages for unskilled agricultural workers. While beneficial to the workers, these higher wages can have serious consequences for farmers, who often operate at

very low margins and may not be able to cope with rising labor costs.

A study of jute producers in Bangladesh ([de Brauw, Kramer, and Murphy 2020](#)) finds that when a household experiences reduced household or hired labor supply, it uses more female household labor but not more female hired labor. A reduced supply of male household labor is associated with improved wages mainly for male laborers, whereas reduced female household labor is associated with improved wages for male laborers and enhanced empowerment of other women in the household. Given existing gender norms, male and female labor are not perfect substitutes for one another, and as a result male outmigration is not associated with improved outcomes for women in cash crop production.

Migration can affect women's workload and empowerment

The gendered impacts of migration on small-scale farming are explored in a study in rural Ha Tinh province in Viet Nam ([Kawarazuka, Duong, and Simelton 2020](#)). Drawing on narratives of women and men with domestic or international migration experience, the study shows that households use various strategies to sustain agricultural production in the absence of migrating members. Women's increased economic independence through their own migration has not necessarily given them increased management roles in agriculture upon their return, but these women are nonetheless increasingly challenging stereotypes of rural women by, for instance, investing their earnings from migration into assets or education for their daughters.

In a study of Myanmar, [Mueller, Schmidt, and Kirkleeng \(2020\)](#) show that women played an active role in the labor force during a period of massive structural change between 2005 and 2010, as demonstrated by the increasing numbers of women in manufacturing jobs, both near and away from home. However, women's engagement in manufacturing was negatively as-

sociated with household welfare, suggesting that monetary returns may not warrant migration for women. This result may be a function of a gender pay gap or reflect households' inability to substitute for the labor of women to complete specific tasks related to household production.

A study of migration and household labor supply in Ethiopia and Malawi ([Mueller et al. 2018](#)) finds that a son's migration results in a greater burden on female heads and female spouses of heads in Ethiopia and on brothers in Malawi, whereas the departure of daughters appears to affect household labor supply only in Malawi. To respond to the labor supply gap caused by the migration of the head of household's son, women in Ethiopia and brothers in Malawi start to play a larger role in agriculture. In Ethiopia, women's greater efforts on the farm are more than offset by the benefits that the migrant son brings to the household's overall income, but Malawian households resort to using both more family labor and hired labor, resulting in a negative impact on net household income.

The "feminization" of agriculture may not benefit women

As rural laborers migrate to urban areas, it is commonly assumed that women can take over traditionally male tasks in agricultural production, with potentially empowering outcomes for women. In Nepal, as in many developing countries, significant male outmigration from rural areas is rapidly transforming sending communities. A study by [Slavchevska et al. \(2020\)](#) analyzes the effects of male outmigration from rural agricultural areas on women's and men's work on and off the farm. In response to male outmigration, men who remain in the community reduce their nonfarm labor without significantly increasing their labor allocation to other activities, whereas women increase their work on the farm, taking on new responsibilities and shifting from being contributing family workers to primary farmers. The women do not engage in higher-value activ-

ities but remain predominantly engaged in producing staple grains. In Viet Nam, the welfare of women whose husbands migrated for work depended significantly on household assets at the time of migration and the success of the husband in sending remittances ([Kawarazuka, Duong, and Simelton 2020](#)).

[Baada and Najjar \(2020\)](#) review the literature on the effects of migration on the "feminization of agriculture" in dryland areas in the Middle East, North Africa, East and West Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America. They find that the outmigration of men has resulted in women's performing more farm labor in agrarian societies. While some studies posit that women taking over male migrants' labor roles has short- and long-term benefits for women in dryland regions, for instance, in terms of autonomy and empowerment, others argue that this feminization leads to more negative outcomes in terms of work burden and socioeconomic status. Migration is projected to increase in many parts of the world, and so will female agricultural labor and the vulnerability of women farmers if efforts are not made to leverage the positive benefits of agricultural feminization. Social and economic policy interventions could leverage the increasing participation of women in dryland agriculture to improve women's livelihoods.

Migration does not always lead to more education

Beyond benefits that migration may have for improving the incomes, well-being, and risk-coping ability of families, a growing literature examines the direct and indirect effects of migration on decisions to invest in education. In addition to the use of remittances for education, another study ([Kosec et al. 2021](#)) finds that negative shocks to income that promote migration simultaneously spur male (though not female) youth (ages 15-25) at the origin to pursue non-compulsory education, though they do so with a lag. This necessarily leads to a widening of the gender gap in

pursuit of non-compulsory education. However, although a major reason for migration among youth is to pursue education, a couple of studies find that migration may also create disincentives for education. [De Brauw and Giles \(2017\)](#) investigate how the reduction of barriers to migration affected the decision of middle school graduates to attend high school in rural China. The study finds that access to migrant employment creates a disincentive for rural youth to remain in villages and enroll in high school, which is accentuated by the significant costs and uncertain returns of attending high school. The authors suggest that reducing the costs of high school education for rural students might help reduce inequality between rural and urban areas and improve the ability of future migrants to shift to more skill-intensive occupations.

What are the impacts of migration on host communities?

Migration can make a serious dent in lower local wages in host communities

The presence of large numbers of migrants or refugees can have significant impacts on host communities, and several studies aimed to better understand these impacts. Since 2013, half of Venezuela's economy has been destroyed; in the wake of this crisis, Colombia has experienced not only the return of Colombian nationals who had migrated to Venezuela, but also a spike in immigration by native Venezuelans. [Caruso et al \(2021\)](#) estimate the impacts of this labor supply shock on labor markets in Colombia. They find that the observed 0.2-percentage-point increase in immigration from Venezuela (by Venezuelans and Colombian returnees) in 2017 reduced informal sector wages by 2 percentage points in urban areas. These results suggest that a combination of programming is warranted to facilitate the economic assimilation of immigrants from a humanitarian standpoint and to promote job security, especially in urban areas.

A study of the impact of weather-induced internal migration in Nepal ([Maystadt et al. 2016](#)) finds that a 1-percentage-point increase in net migration reduces the wages of highly skilled, formal sector non-migrants in receiving communities by 5.7 percent and increases unemployment among low-skilled workers there by 1 percentage point. The study concludes that weather-driven migration can have significant effects on labor markets, wages, and employment when the net number of migrants is large, highly educated and highly skilled, and drawn to a limited number of destinations.



Bangladesh has experienced a massive influx of forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. To evaluate the potential consequences for the southern Bangladesh economy, a study ([Filipski et al. 2019](#)) used a model to illustrate the potential effect of a large arrival of displaced populations on wages, the supply and demand of goods, and the incomes of migrant and host populations. It shows that if the migrants enter the Cox's Bazar District labor markets only, their large number could potentially cause wage levels to drop by about 30 percent. Cash transfers to migrants could mitigate the wage effects by stimulating local demand, but some local households may be hurt by lower wages and higher prices. The authors suggest that matched transfers to local popula-

tions and investments in local industry could potentially offset some of these negative impacts.

Long-run investments can improve the impacts on communities hosting involuntary migrants

Most of the world's displaced people are hosted in low-income countries. Focusing on evidence from poor countries, [Maystadt et al. \(2019\)](#) reviewed the literature on the economic consequences of hosting refugees or internally displaced people. In the short run, violence, environmental degradation, and disease propagation are major risks to the host populations. In the long run, infrastructure, trade, and labor markets are key channels that determine the impacts on host communities – either positively or negatively. To enhance resilience and transition from humanitarian assistance toward development, investments in road infrastructure and efforts to deepen trade with refugees' countries of origin are strategies worth exploring.

A study conducted in northern Ecuador ([Valli, Peterman, and Hidrobo 2019](#)) examined whether a short-term transfer program targeted to Colombian refugees and poor Ecuadorians led to changes in social cohesion. Results suggest that the program helped raise social cohesion among Colombian refugees in the hosting community through enhanced personal agency, greater acceptance of diversity, confidence in institutions, and social participation. However, the program had no impact on social cohesion among Ecuadorians. Nonetheless, because the indicators of social cohesion included perceptions of trust of and treatment by the host community and its institutions, the study results suggest that social protection schemes, including even short-term interventions, could have positive impacts on social cohesion *between* refugees and host populations. Moreover, social protection can help reduce the costs of migration borne by poor households and better enable them to use these transfers for livelihood development or to cope with shocks.

In conclusion

PIM studies on migration contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics and characteristics of migration and its impacts in developing countries. Key contributions include the following:

Characteristics of migration

PIM research has made it clear that migration can take many forms. While rural-to-urban migration is widely recognized, rural-to-rural migration also plays a major role, and peri-urban areas can be both sources and destinations for migrants. Moreover, migration can be temporary or permanent, covering short or long distances; and multiple migrations, including returnees, are observed in many circumstances. One relatively stable characteristic is that more educated and younger individuals are more likely to migrate, both to rural and urban areas.

Causes of migration

In addition to the pull factors of economic opportunity, education, and marriage, there are a variety of push factors that lead to emigration including severe climate events, conflict, other income shocks, and poor access to land.

Individuals' perceptions of relative deprivation contribute to their decisions to migrate in some cases.

These factors play out and interact in complex ways that generate different results in different settings. For example, in some cases climate change is a driver of migration, and in other cases it may constrain individuals' ability to migrate, preventing people from seizing the opportunities offered by mobility.

Consequences of migration

Migrants often have high unemployment rates, especially in the short term.

In the medium to long term, migration generally leads to better economic outcomes for migrants and for individuals remaining behind. However,

other measures of well-being, including psychological ones, may not improve.

Labor supply and markets in sending households and communities are affected by the reduction in (mostly male) labor, which particularly increases women's labor burden.

In communities hosting large migrant populations, wage levels could decrease where there is a large influx of migrants and/or the size of the local economy is small or modest.

In conclusion, migration is a fundamental component of economic development as individuals tend to pursue economic or educational opportunities that offer better futures than their current circumstances. Thus, removing high barriers to migration would be a widely applicable policy objective. In terms of specific policy recommendations, PIM's research shows that causes and consequences of migration are diverse and, therefore, approaches to addressing constraints or adverse consequences of migration will need to be tailored to different situations.

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