



MIGNEX Background Paper

Development impacts of migration as reflected in focus groups

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MIGNEX

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MIGNEX Background Papers

The MIGNEX Background Papers are scientific papers containing the documentation and analyses that underpin the project results. Selected insights from background papers are also presented in non-technical form in other formats, including MIGNEX Policy Briefs and MIGNEX Reports.

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Development impacts of migration as reflected in focus groups

Discussions in 104 focus groups across the 26 MIGNEX research areas show that people are well aware of the positive and negative impacts that migration has on multi-dimensional development at the individual, household and community levels.

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The multi-dimensional impacts of migration are associated mainly with remittances and the absence of household and community members.

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The impact of migration extends beyond individuals to communities and family life. It leads to family separation, changes in community demographics, and shifts in culture and traditions.

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The four phases of migration (pre-departure, transportation, post-arrival and return) are shaped by and shape health outcomes for migrants as well as the communities they come into contact with.

Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, migration has emerged as a phenomenon of profound significance for its societal, economic, and political implications and far-reaching developmental consequences. While the relationship between migration and development has been studied in different contexts, this Background Paper takes a nuanced perspective, delving into how individuals discuss the development implications of migration. These insights are collected from participants in 104 focus groups conducted as part of the MIGNEX project, spanning 26 research areas across ten countries.

We explore how people discuss the influence of migration on development through the eyes of those who have experienced their own migration, or that of others in their family or communities. While the media frequently covers

migration trends, motivations, and impacts on host countries, the effects of migration on the areas and countries of origin often receive less attention, with a disproportionate focus on the "brain drain" phenomenon. In the academic context, a substantial body of literature examines how migration influences development, focusing on various channels such as monetary remittances, social remittances (cultural transmission), and the physical absence of a household member (for a literature review, see Andersson and Siegel (2020)). This literature has explored the impact of migration at multiple levels, including the individual, household, community, regional economy, and global economy.

Most of these studies use quantitative data and are based on a lot of assumptions about mechanisms that link migration and development. Few studies investigate the lived experiences and perceptions of those affected by migration. This is where we aim to add to the existing literature by delving into the narratives, perceptions, and voices of focus group participants. As will be discussed below, people with different links to migration participated in the group discussions. Some participants had a migration experience themselves, while others had close family members who migrated, while others only knew of community members who migrated. This paper is guided by our central research question: *How do people talk about the development implications of migration?*

In this Background Paper, we cast a wide net in defining migration; encompassing all those who have left their usual place of residence, regardless of the cause, destination, legal status, or duration of absence (Carling, 2019). Development, too, is viewed in a holistic light. We take into account its multi-dimensional nature, including the following five dimensions: standard of living, education, health, participation in society, and security from violence (Carling, 2019). Our analysis primarily focuses on the ways in which individuals discuss development in the context of migration, aligning with the MIGNEX project's emphasis on the individual and local contexts. Following a similar multi-dimensional approach to the quantitative MIGNEX Background Paper 7.1, we also structure the main findings along these five dimensions of multi-dimensional development, following a more general discussion of narratives around migration and development.

In answering the research question, we aim to analyse the intricate dimensions of development as they are perceived and articulated by affected individuals and communities, transcending economic considerations to encompass social, cultural, political and psychological aspects. The focus group methodology employed for our research is particularly valuable, as it provides a platform for participants to share their personal experiences, unravel the complexities of migration, and articulate how it has shaped their lives and communities. Through these dialogues, we aim to offer a comprehensive understanding of how people perceive the role of migration in moulding societies and influencing development outcomes. We do not aim to verify or contest existing research but rather add nuanced narratives of respondents from diverse communities affected by migration in different ways. The intention of this paper is also not to provide generalisable data through a representative sample but rather to use the voices of participants

in our focus group discussions to add to the understanding of links between migration and development as voiced by those experiencing them.

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The qualitative MIGNEX dataset encompasses transcripts from 104 focus groups involving young adults aged 18 to 39 years and was collected in 26 research areas across ten countries spanning Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. The central theme of these discussions revolved around how participants perceived the opportunities available in the respective communities to young people when they reach the age of leaving school in their respective communities. Participants were also encouraged to share their perspectives on the evolution and transformations within the respective research areas (Erdal et al., 2022).

Migration naturally emerged as a topic during these conversations, stemming from the experiences and patterns of mobility and immobility observed within the research areas and among participants in specific focus groups. Moreover, migration was explicitly addressed in conjunction with discussions about livelihoods. Towards the conclusion of each discussion, participants were directly queried about their views on migration and its potential impacts, both on an individual level and within the broader research area (Erdal et al., 2022).

The paper is organised into five main sections, some containing several sub-sections. The first section explores the theoretical and conceptual underpinnings that inform our analysis of how people discuss migration's developmental impacts. The second section details our methods, data sources, and analytical approach. The third section then briefly presents participants' general narratives on migration's impacts on development at the individual and community levels. The fourth and most substantial section then presents our empirical analyses, structured around the five dimensions of multi-dimensional development outlined above and as perceived and articulated by individuals. The final section presents our conclusions, including future research directions and policy implications.

Theoretical and conceptual considerations

Narratives and discourses about migration and development routinely rely on economic theories to explain the motivations for migration across time and space, the structural constraints that mediate migration flows as well as the propensity for migration to transfer development-enhancing resources to the plethora of actors involved in migration – facilitators of migration, migrant households and communities in the origin, employers and tax authorities at the destination and the migrants themselves, among others. There is no consensus on a causal link between migration and development, even though an associational nexus has been argued by some studies (de Haas, 2019; Marchand et al., 2023; McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021; Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019). Theories on migration decision-making and drivers of migration have included the more simplistic push-pull theories inspired by Ravenstein (1889) and Lee (1966) that list sets of positive, attractive factors such as employment opportunities and welfare

systems that help formulate migration aspirations for migration from the point of origin to a given destination. These are presumed to be augmented by the effects of negative expulsive factors such as high unemployment rates and weak healthcare systems at the origin that motivate aspiring migrants who have social, economic and cultural capitals or assets to leave. In this context, migration is perceived to be driven primarily by economic factors. This theory has been critiqued as being too simplistic since such decisions go beyond the outcome of net cost-benefit analysis, and the theorists' postulations lack clarity on the relative weighting of push and pull factors in shaping migration decisions (de Haas, 2010). The Neoclassical (Lewis, 1954) and the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) (Stark, 1991; Taylor, 1999) theories both endorse the argument that labour and income differentials between origin and destination communities, together with unrestricted access to information by individuals, define migration trends. Furthermore, NELM highlights the diversification of the sources of income, spreading of risks and offsetting credit constraints as important considerations in migration decision-making by household units. Individuals are presumed to be autonomous and rational actors who make decisions to migrate based on a rational methodical cost-benefit analysis, according to neoclassical theorists. The assumption is that ideas and tangible assets in the form of remittances are expected to move in the opposite direction to support development (Lewis, 1954). The main distinction point of departure between the two theories is the critique of the neoclassical theory by NELM theorists that neoclassical theory is too focussed on the individual as too individualistic. The NELM theorists emphasise the pivotal role of households in migration decision-making. Both theories accord remittances that ensue from migration with developmental effects on recipient communities and individuals. Others, such as the Human Capital Theory (Mincer, 1993; Becker, 1994), highlight personal characteristics such as skills, education, and physical abilities as core determinants of one's propensity to migrate. Beyond the various assumptions on the migration decision-making processes and the drivers of migration, discourses about whether there is a causal or associational relationship between migration and development are still uneven, unsettled and contested (Ellerman, 2003; Newland, 2007; Castles, 2008).

This is part due to a lack of comparative studies that take in consideration the experiences of those affected by migration. Examining the migration-development nexus through the lens of "narratives" of these people is therefore a valuable step. Narratives are "selective depictions of reality across at least two points in time that include one or more causal claims" (Dennison, 2021: 3). Narratives include related social practices and contextual factors used to make sense of experience (de Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008). As Ricoeur (1984: x) notes, narratives tend to group together and integrate into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events. The use of narratives allows for a holistic analysis rooted in space and time. Narratives related to migration and development help to decipher the nature of the bi-directional relationship between migration and development, the causes and consequences of the effects of migration on development and vice versa (Boswell et al., 2011). Our focus group discussion participants employed narratives about their experiences to examine changes, over time, in their standard of living, education, health,

participation in society and security from violence (Erdal, Godin, Fitzmaurice, Carling and Karl, 2023).

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Methodological considerations

The broader MIGNEX research was carried out in 26 research areas across ten countries (Cabo Verde (2), Guinea (2), Ghana (3), Nigeria (3), Ethiopia (3), Somalia (2), Tunisia (2), Turkey (3), Afghanistan (3) and Pakistan (3)). Figure 1 provides an overview of the different research areas and their locations.

An explanatory sequential mixed methods approach was adopted whereby research teams in each country collected quantitative data, which was analysed prior to the collection of qualitative data in the same research areas. The initial findings of the quantitative research helped shape the framing of the qualitative data collection. The qualitative data was anchored in a comprehensive MIGNEX Background Paper¹ which highlighted the objectives, approaches, ethics, and categorisations of participants. This Background Paper provided guidance and reflections to field assistants, supervisors, and research leads on community entry processes, selection of participants, planning of focus group discussions, choice of venue, a semi-structured focus group discussion guide, issues on positionality, a compilation of metadata on participants, protection of the identity of participants, protocols on photography, processing and coding of collected data and analysis of data. The focus group discussions were guided by a field instrument which covered the things that are good about the given research area, reflections on negative and positive changes over time, pathways to gaining a livelihood and becoming an adult, and the specific role of migration as a livelihood opportunity for youth. Each focus group discussion was about two hours long.

¹ MIGNEX Handbook Chapter 8: Qualitative data collection, by Marta Bivand Erdal and Jorgen Carling (June 2020).



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Figure 1. MIGNEX Research Areas

The focus group discussions were preceded by in-depth key informant interviews among individuals in research areas who were knowledgeable about community dynamics.²

For each research area, focus group discussions were organised for four separate categories of participants:

1. Males with strong links to migration;
2. Males with weak links to migration;
3. Females with strong links to migration;
4. Females with weak links to migration.

Strong versus weak links to migration were defined flexibly in the different research areas depending on the local dynamics. For areas where migration is prevalent, strong links were defined to mean the participant himself or herself is a return migrant or has a direct family member who is a current or return migrant. In cases where migration is less prevalent, strong links were defined as having a distant relative or friend or knowing someone who has migrated. As such, it was the task for the fieldwork teams in each research area to operationalise based on local realities what ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ links meant. In effect, what in some areas were ‘weak’ migration links – in other

² Key themes included characteristics of the research area, livelihoods, poverty and inequality, development interventions, characteristics of public social protection, characteristics of infrastructure development, prominence of international tourism, prominence of micro-level international aid, prominence of international investment, educational expansion, level of insecurity and violence, environmental degradation, vulnerability to natural disasters, overall atmosphere (hope versus despair), characteristics of out-migration, characteristics of in-migration, characteristics of return migration, salience of international out-migration, attitudes towards international out-migration, feasibility of international migration, migration information campaigns, gender aspects of migration, strength of transnational ties, and the importance of collective remittances

areas might mean ‘strong’ – depending on what the full picture of migration dynamics was in each area.

As argued by Cresswell (2006), qualitative research techniques are useful when one wants to explore and gain an in-depth picture of the meanings and subjective views that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human phenomenon. Similarly, Hammarberg et al. (2016) posit that qualitative methods are useful to answer questions about experiences, meaning and perspectives from the perspective of the participant. The choice of this design was also informed by the fact that we were interested in seeking the views of participants on a focused topic (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Braun and Clarke, 2021). Our choice of a qualitative design is informed by the main objective of our research, which was to gain in-depth knowledge on the significance of migration as a livelihood option and the perceived benefits and challenges to the migrant, their households and communities. This background paper focuses on the results of the focus group discussions across 26 different research areas, in ten countries.

After conducting the focus groups, the researchers fully transcribed the audio recordings of the discussions and employed the reflexive thematic coding and analysis technique to analyse the qualitative data. This approach involved the centrality of the researchers’ subjectivity and reflexivity, involving a six- phase process (Braun and Clarke, 2021). The reflexive thematic coding and analysis technique first involved reading through all the transcribed texts to help with familiarisation. The following process involved coding the text using the NVivo software. This involved assigning words and phrases to chunks of the textual data, which enabled the researchers to sort, reduce and distil the content of the textual data. The coding process was iterative, involving revisions, reorganisation of codes and relating coded interview data to the key questions asked during the data collection process.

The study relied on a combination of both deductive and inductive coding approaches. The inductive approach is a bottom-up process whereby codes are derived from the data, while the deductive approach is based on a top-down method guided by existing initial codes. We deductively started with a set of codes based on our research questions and existing research frameworks and theories, but we also inductively came up with new codes and iterations of the codes as we combed through the data (Erdal and Carling, 2020).

The next step involved analysing the data using the thematic analysis technique. This approach involved identifying and grouping closely related codes, expressions, ideas, and patterns which emerged from the qualitative data. This enabled the researchers to derive the key themes for analysis and write-up. Regarding coding the different country data, the research team assigned short codes to represent each country.

Table 1. MIGNEX focus groups across research areasMIGNEX
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Country	Research Area 1	Research Area 2	Research Area 3
Cabo Verde	São Nicolau CPV1A; CPV1B CPV1C; CPV1D	Boa Vista CPV2A; CPV2B CPV2C; CPV2D	n/a
Guinea	Boffa GIN1A; GIN1B GIN1C; GIN1D	Dialakoro GIN2A; GIN2B GIN2C; GIN2D	n/a
Ghana	Gbane GHA1A; GHA1B GHA1C; GHA1D	Golf City GHA2A; GHA2B GHA2C; GHA2D	New Takoradi GHA3A; GHA3B GHA3C; GHA3D
Nigeria	Down Quarters NGA1A; NGA1B NGA1C; NGA1D	Awe NGA2A; NGA2B NGA2C; NGA2D	Epkoma NGA3A; NGA3B NGA3C; NGA3D
Ethiopia	Kombolcha ETH1A; ETH1B ETH1C; ETH1D	Batu ETH2A; ETH2B ETH2C; ETH2D	Moyale ETH3A; ETH3B ETH3C; ETH3D
Somalia	Erigavo SOM1A; SOM1B SOM1C; SOM1D	Baidoa SOM2A; SOM2B SOM2C; SOM2D	n/a
Tunisia	Enfidha TUN1A; TUN1B TUN1C; TUN1D	Redeyef TUN2A; TUN2B TUN2C; TUN2D	n/a
Turkey	Hopa TUR1A; TUR1B TUR1C; TUR1D	Yenice TUR2A; TUR2B TUR2C; TUR2D	Kilis TUR3A; TUR3B TUR3C; TUR3D
Afghanistan	Shahrake Jabrael AFG1A; AFG1B AFG1C; AFG1D	Behsud AFG2A; AFG2B AFG2C; AFG2D	Shahrake Mahdia AFG3A; AFG3B AFG3C; AFG3D
Pakistan	Chot Dheeran PAK1A; PAK1B PAK1C; PAK1D	Youhanabad PAK2A; PAK2B PAK2C; PAK2D	Keti Bandar PAK3A; PAK3B PAK3C; PAK3D

The intention of this paper is not to provide generalisable data through a representative sample but rather to use the voices of participants in our focus group discussions to highlight the positive and negative development impacts of migration as given by our diverse male-female group of participants with both strong and weak links to migration. We identified general narratives on the impacts of migration on the migrants and their communities, as well as those specific to different dimensions of development, in line with our multi-dimensional conceptualisation of development which is centred around standard of living, education, health, participation in society, and security from violence. We start by discussing the more general points before going into these specific dimensions of development and how the research participants discussed these across the focus groups in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

General narratives on the impacts of migration on the individual and the community levels

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Migration and development on the individual level

Many participants expressed positive sentiments about migration and how it impacts those undertaking journeys and the households and communities who stay behind. While the latter is discussed in the following section, the focus groups highlighted the benefits of acquiring new experiences, knowledge, and opportunities for the migrants themselves. Migration is seen as a path to self-improvement and personal development. Participants expect that migrants gain valuable life experience both personally and professionally. Financially, migration can lead to better earning opportunities. Furthermore, the cultural exchange that migration brings, helping individuals understand different cultures and ways of life, was considered an essential aspect of growth by the focus group participants across almost all research areas.

Emigration is always good because it's not about things, it's not just financially but also ideas... of something, that you here you see that chair from one perspective, but if you go you'd see the same chair from another perspective, so you bring another idea to your place to your country, it's always good to have this exchange, culture exchange, race, people, we learn. (São Nicolau, CPV1D)

When a person moves from Kombolcha, he or she exchanges culture, learns new skills, and expands their knowledge. (Kombolcha, ETH1C)

I think it benefits the individual because he is able to make a living and earn some income. Also, migration allows the individual to experience different cultures and diverse ways of life as well as get in touch with more people and build a large social network. (New Takoradi, GHA3C)

Yes, it is good if a young man goes out, it is good if he walks [travels]. If a young man goes away, he will see and get to know a lot of things. But if you spend all your life sitting in the same place, you will be like an animal. You haven't seen anything, you know nothing. A young man has to leave, so that he will get experience. (Dialakoro, GIN2D)

Positive, positive. When you travel you discover a new culture, a new system, a new way of life... so when I come back here, I can make a difference. (Enfidha, TUN1B)

Small places have a downside: you live in a bubble, with people who are very similar to you socioeconomically and linguistically. You do not see your reflex in a metropolitan or in another country. You see different worlds and histories, I think it's an important thing. (Hopa, TUR1B)

If we think in terms of preparation for life, if we think in terms of experience, it is a positive thing ... she/he will discover what is right and what is wrong. (Hopa, TUR1C)

Of course it is good for the person himself, as he will be able to develop himself and develop his skills, as the person when he goes to larger cities

such as Istanbul, of course, the field of work is more available, as Kilis is a small city with a large population, this causes a problem. (Kilis, TUR3D)

At the same time, participants acknowledged that migration comes with challenges and negative consequences for the migrants. Some mention the dangers associated with irregular migration routes, including the risk of death. This is especially relevant for those taking dangerous journeys by sea or through hazardous regions. Participants noted that people who migrate may face personal and psychological challenges, particularly when the migration experience does not go as planned or when individuals encounter difficulties in the host country. It was emphasised that the financial gains of migration can come at a personal cost, such as physical and psychological harm.

I told you before that I agreed with legal migration, for example, someone moves to abroad for education such as getting his master's degree, he is our capital as he returns to the country and gets involved in its development, but when some is migrating to abroad to illegal means and endangering his life, it is called illegal migration. When we see the videos on Facebook or the internet, families drown in the sea. Why do they migrate? because they are forced or they are faced with poverty but this kind of migration is not necessary and acceptable. (Behsud, AFG2D)

It's bad for him. He has been cut off from his family, community and country. He is facing his hardships alone. The journey itself is tiring and exhausting. At times dangerous. He has no one there. He doesn't share anything with the family. (Chot Dheeran, PAK1A)

Participants also discussed the differences between the migration of women and men and the implications for their respective development. In these discussions, the impact of migration on women is recognised as differing from that on men, with women often more vulnerable due to cultural and economic factors.

Men and women would be affected differently by a move from Kombolcha. Due to cultural and economic vulnerabilities, it would be extremely difficult for a woman to do so. It is more likely for women than men to end up and face undesirable consequences. (Kombolcha, ETH1A)

Overall, the view of the impacts of migration on development at the individual level varies depending on individual circumstances and experiences. Several respondents detailed that how the two are linked depends on who migrates under what circumstances and to where. These were evident narratives highlighting that whether migration is perceived as good or bad is contingent on the specific situation faced by the person who migrates, including the opportunities and challenges encountered along the way and in the destination country.

If the migration is legal, it is good and illegal migration isn't good. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A)

Migration is good but it is better to developed countries. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A)

If migration is for life development, it is good but if it is a forced migration due to war and poverty, I think it is the worst thing. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

Migration has two types; compulsory and voluntary migration. I don't agree with migration if it is out of compulsion and due to insecurity. I agree with migration if it is voluntary and someone has a sponsor in the target country and, which leads to the development of the individual. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3C)

To say a move out of Kombolcha is a good thing or a bad thing for the individual, we should consider the circumstances. If the individual moves without a clear plan, that would have a bad consequence. Whereas, if the move from Kombolcha is to start a planned work, for a meeting, or to visit someone, this would be a good thing for the individual. (Kombolcha, ETH1A)

Whether it is a good thing or a bad thing for that person, it depends on the situation the person encounters in that country. Sometimes you may get a job in a good home, and sometimes in a bad home, and even sometimes people may even die. So it's all the condition you face there that matters most. (Batu, ETH2C)

I think migration is a maybe in the sense that when one travels outside the country without a job, he is going to be burdened or go through hell because the person does not have anything that will make him earn some income. On the other hand, one may go having a profession and that will make him earn some income and have a good life there. (Golf City, GHA2B)

Migration is a good thing when a person has a plan of what they're going to do that can fetch them money in the new place. Going because others are going or going without a plan means that the person is going to suffer in the new place. Migration is good but the migrant must have something in mind. (Epkoma, NGA3C)

It is also clear that for some participants, the hardships migrants may face are worth it as long as the migrant comes out stronger on the other side. Acknowledging that it is not easy, for these participants to face and overcome challenges is part of the personal development process of individual migrants.

He/she will gain emotional and physical strength, which is a positive thing. You will encounter both good and negative things while travelling abroad, like having and not having a job, as well as being hit or assaulted by strangers. These interactions strengthen you, and if you make amends for your nation, it will be a valuable lesson and source of strength for you to work in your country. (Kombolcha, ETH1C)

Migration and development on the community level

Several respondents highlighted the potential positive impacts of migration on communities. They emphasise that if migrants succeed, they can bring about substantial benefits. This includes the possibility of improving their families' and towns' economic situations. However, social aspects such as relieving population pressure and promoting knowledge transfer. In these cases, migration is seen as a valuable path to create a brighter future for individuals and entire communities. These narratives point to the transformative potential of migration in supporting economic development.

Migration in itself doesn't benefit the individual rather, it benefits the community as a whole. I say this because if I travel for instance and I do nothing for the community but I send money home for a house to be built

for me, it ends up employing people in the construction firm who are others also in the community. Also, if someone else in the community wants to also travel and he doesn't know me personally but knows someone close to me in the community, the person might recommend me to him to help him out with his travelling process. So, I don't think migration supports only the individual. (Golf City, GHA2B)

Yes and this is because in my family, my uncle was the first to have migrated and when he got there, he came for other relatives and they are all doing something profitable in the community. As for the kids, they make sure that they get good education and so I think migration benefits the community. (New Takoradi, GHA3D)

Yes, migration is good for Ekpoma because when a person travels and gets a good job, they start sending money to their families back here. Some others who travel to get more knowledge and then can use their knowledge to expand their community and educate others when they get back. (Epkoma, NGA3C)

On Ikekogbe road, a road construction project was carried out and about 3 million Naira was needed to complete it. It was one person who migrated aboard that single handedly funded the road project. (Epkoma, NGA3D)

It has positive impact because people who migrate to abroad can financially help their relatives and neighbors. In this way, Chot Dheeran gets help from whenever people feel this need. People are donating in welfare works in the village and as a result there is an ambulance available in Chot Dheeran which is bought with the donation of migrants. (Chot Dheeran, PAK1C)

I know it seems like Youhanabad wouldn't benefit from this, but I think it would. If our house gets better and our lifestyle improves, those around us will be inspired to plan in similar ways for their families too. Youhanabad might end up changing completely. (Youhanabad, PAK2A)

However, I will recommend any youth to study outside Erigavo but to return to and apply what she/he learns to improve their region. The main objective of learning is to make a change and I don't see a better way to bring change other than improving where you come from. Many changes are needed in Erigavo such as education, hospitals, and housing. I will highly recommend educated youth to bring changes to the region they were born. (Erigavo, SOM1B)

The community feels that if someone travelled to a better country than this one, they may earn money and invest it in their hometown, hence residents in Baidoa have a positive attitude toward helping individuals migrate from one country to another or even a better spot inside Somalia. (Baidoa, SOM2D)

I believe that the impact on Redeyef was still positive. Those who migrated from here recently are honestly not that well educated nor do they have any impressive qualifications. If anything, there's less unemployment. (Redeyef, TUN2C)

They communicate with those here even if they don't come back. They can convey what they see there to those here. By the way, they're definitely coming back, even if it's for a holiday in the summer. (Hopa, TUR1B)

Of course, it's a good thing. People who go there will help their relatives. Even if they send the money they have saved, I think it will revive the trade

of Kilis. For example, what are they doing, he saves his money there, sends it to his parents here, tells them to buy a house, land, vineyard or garden for him. So if they make their savings and invest here, it's a perfect thing for this country. (Kilis, TUR3B)

I think it is better for Kilis, of course, as Kilis is small in area and its population is very large, and it is not balanced with the size of the city. In the event that some leave, a balance will occur between the area and the number of residents, and this will be much better on all levels. Even education will become better. As the classroom in the school can accommodate twenty students now, but it has forty students. Certainly, fewer students will be better. (Kilis, TUR3C)

Other participants expressed concerns regarding the potentially negative consequences of migration on their communities. They mention cases where migrants who leave for education or work abroad do not return and contribute to their hometown's development. The worries stem from the belief that these individuals may not directly benefit the town and sometimes may even forget their roots. This perspective highlights the concerns associated with the departure of youth, as further discussed in the following section. More generally, several respondents discussed the effects large-scale migration has on a place when a significant share of the population leaves.

When someone migrates it is bad for others because it will scare others and everyone starts worrying because the town will get empty like the current situation. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A)

A community will improve if the people are together and united, so if most of the people leave the town then that town would become paralysis. If youth leave the country, then we will lose the workforce that we need. If the elderly people leave, then we will lose the expertise along with them gone, which then will leave a paralysis Afghanistan behind regarding education and economic and other perspectives. (AFG1A)

Migration isn't good for the town because our town will become empty and it will impact the area negatively. Because no one will be there to work for development of the community. (AFG1B)

When a person migrates abroad, after settling there, they invite their families there as well, which has a kind of negative impact on the community because the community gets empty. (AFG2A)

It has negative impacts because it will decrease the number of people in an area. when youth leave, the area will not develop. These are young people who have the capacity to improve and develop an area. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3D)

Migration has negative impacts on the area. If males leave their country, there will be no one to serve their country. Women are not able to work in the construction sector and when males have left the country it will make it even worse. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3D)

Do you know somebody who is orphaned? Due to migration, Kombolcha is like an orphan. All of the town's native residents have now left. (Kombolcha, ETH1C)

Sir, it's bad because the total population in itself is around 1000. And if one by one everyone starts leaving, the whole population is going to vanish.

And gradually, Keti Bandar itself will vanish away. And all the fishing business will stop for once and all. (Keti Bandar, PAK3B)

Moreover, people leaving the city decreases the demand and supply of the city which leads to the decrease of the economy of the city. The small business owner will have to bring less material to the shop and fewer people will buy. The economic short wave will bring down more owners and that will lead to disaster for many individual business owners. These are directly linked together and slow down the process of living together. (Erigavo, SOM1A)

It's good for the person who migrates but has a negative impact on Redeyef and the community of Redeyef. It's good for an engineer to go abroad to get a good salary. For his family also. But not for the community. He would help his community a lot more by working here. (Redeyef, TUN2B)

In addition, some respondents discussed the potential benefits of migration while recognising the downsides. For example, they acknowledged that migration could help lower unemployment and the need for social services but expressed concerns about population decline. This narrative reflects a cautious stance on migration, acknowledging both its positive and negative aspects.

Migration has its own advantages and disadvantages to our town. The good thing about it is that as my friend already said you will go to a better place and will know about foreigners culture and when you carry the positive points of that culture in your own community your life will improve. And the bad thing is that when people migrate from the town the population decreases and the situation deteriorates over time and the economic situation will become poor. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1D)

I am in favour of emigration. However, when you're thinking just about yourself, you don't care about where you were born, you don't care about your fellows, in that case I don't advise because the island will always lose, we lose a brain, an arm to help, less people to pay taxes to develop the island. (São Nicolau, CPV1C)

For the community, moving from Kombolcha has both advantages and disadvantages. When a skilled manpower departs Kombolcha, for example, it has a detrimental impact on the town. Whereas, when a jobless person migrates from Kombolcha, on the other hand, this has the benefit of lowering unemployment. The need for essential social services and infrastructure will likewise decrease as a result of this. (Kombolcha, ETH1B)

There is double impact on individual as well as on society. It can be good and bad. For example, a young boy migrates to any European or Gulf country. He works hard and support his family financially. It means it is making a positive impact on the society because people will aspire to send their children to other countries for better future. If the same person, does not support the family and his visa expenses become problem for the family, it will become discouraging element for the society. (Youhanabad, PAK2D)

Moving out from Erigavo is sometimes good because experiencing different cities, cultures, or seeing different constructions may increase that person's knowledge. Contrary to that, moving out from Erigavo is not noble because that individual may leave his family or loved ones. Moving out is also not good for the city, because the individual who moves out may be a doctor,

engineer, nurse or good neighbour and will leave an entire society that was depending on him/her. (Erigavo, SOM1C)

Other individuals expressed another nuanced perspective, acknowledging that the impact of migration depends on various factors. For instance, the occupation of the person migrating can influence whether they contribute positively to the community. Those who maintain connections with their hometowns might play a key role in conveying experiences and supporting others who stay behind. While some migrants keep in touch or return and actively support their communities, others may not, depending on their motivations and circumstances. Then again, some participants discussed that even migrants who do not return can provide crucial financial and moral support. These narratives underline the complexities surrounding migration's impact on communities and the need to consider multiple factors in such analyses.

Those who have gone abroad have economically supported their families back home. They send money to their families to fulfil their needs. Others are facing economic problems. Those who have someone abroad are economically better than those who don't have someone outside the country. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3C)

I voted maybe because it depends on the occupation of the person migrating. For instance, if I am a footballer and I get the opportunity to travel, knowing that my initial training spot was not a good one, when I return, I would do my best to develop the training spot in the community for others to benefit. However, if I travel and I do not land a good job that pays well, when I return, I will not be able to do anything that the community will benefit from that's why I voted maybe. (Golf City, GHA2C)

The community does not always benefit because some people migrate only for personal reasons and so they only have thoughts about their life. Some also remember the community in which they come from and so they tend to help the community in some ways. (New Takoradi, GHA3D)

It depends. You can hear that someone has left and he has become an outsider, a vagabond. This is a shame for Dialakoro. But if someone goes away for adventure and then he comes back, even without money, but with some experience, this is fine. Dialakoro will take an advantage of that. It is fine also if this person is successful abroad and then comes back to build a house here. (Dialakoro, GIN2A)

It depends on the individual. Some persons don't even come back home. The main reason they traveled was to assist their families and communities but they become concerned about only themselves when they get there. Some of them just send money for their young ones to join them there and that's how they keep asking people to join them and at the end of the day, there is no improvement in the community. (Epkoma, NGA3D)

It is a loss for Chot Dheeran. He has gone by leaving everything. For example, I leave this place, I disconnect with it. Then it's a loss for the place. But if I remain connected then it is beneficial. (Chot Dheeran, PAK1D)

Perceived impacts of migration for multi-dimensional development processes at the local level

In this section, we look at how aspects that relate to the five dimensions of multi-dimensional development we outlined before were discussed in the MIGNEX focus groups. To recap, these dimensions are: standard of living, education, health, participation and social cohesion, and (in)security. While the participants were not explicitly asked about these aspects in relation to the impact that migration has on them, we were able to identify several instances where themes that can be grouped along these dimensions emerged from the discussions. Consequently, each dimension will be further broken down into sub-sections as suitable based on what came out of the focus groups and the narratives of those who contributed their experiences and opinions.

Standard of living and economic consequences of migration

Moving from the more general discussion to more specific themes that evolved from the discussions across the 26 research areas, we start with the section on the standard of living and the economic consequences of migration. Migration and its economic consequences, particularly their impacts on living standards for those staying back, have been the subject of many studies. Researchers have explored various facets of this complex relationship, revealing nuanced insights.

Central to this discussion is the role of financial remittances, the money migrants send to their families and friends in their country of origin. Studies consistently highlight how remittances significantly supplement household incomes in sending regions. These financial inflows are essential for meeting basic needs, including housing, healthcare, and education (Adams 2009; Amuedo-Dorantes & Pozo 2006; Yang 2011). In addition, remittances have been recognised as a reliable and stable source of foreign exchange in many developing countries. They play a crucial role in balancing trade deficits and stabilising national economies.

In some cases, countries with a high volume of remittances have experienced economic growth and reduced poverty rates, contributing to an overall improvement in the standard of living (Adams & Page 2005; Cazachevici, Havranek & Horvath 2020). However, the impact of remittances can vary depending on factors such as the volume of remittances received, the size and nature of the local economy, and government policies. While remittances offer clear economic benefits, they also raise questions about their sustainability and the potential for dependence on external financial support.

Another critical aspect of migration's economic consequences lies in its effects on labour markets in origin countries. The departure of a significant portion of the workforce can lead to opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, migration can alleviate unemployment pressures by creating job

openings that match the skills and qualifications of those who have emigrated (Karam & Decaluwé 2010; Pryymachenko, Fregert & Andersson 2013). On the other hand, the outflow of workers may result in labour shortages in specific sectors and brain drain (Beine, Docquier & Rapoport 2008, 2001). This dynamic can have varied effects on the standard of living in origin communities. Increased employment opportunities may lead to economic improvements and enhanced living standards. However, it can also result in labour shortages that may hamper economic growth in certain sectors, potentially impacting productivity and access to services.

Moreover, migration is intricately linked to skill transfer and human capital development. Individuals who acquire new skills or knowledge abroad and return to their home countries contribute to economic development and innovation. This has the potential to elevate the standard of living in the long term (Batista, Lacuesta & Vicente 2012; Gibson & McKenzie 2012).

However, it is important to acknowledge the potential challenges and inequalities associated with migration. While it can have positive economic effects, migration can also exacerbate community inequalities and vulnerabilities. Research has delved into negative consequences such as brain drain, left-behind family dynamics, and disparities between migrants and those who remain (Docquier & Rapoport 2012; McKenzie & Rapoport 2007).

In summary, the literature on the economic consequences of migration underscores the multifaceted nature of this relationship. It highlights the potential for migration to be a driver of economic development and improved living standards while also acknowledging the presence of challenges and disparities. In analysing the MIGNEX focus group data, we discover positive narratives around remittances, investments, skills transfers and increased tourism. At the same time, participants in the focus groups discussed the negative impacts of migration in their respective areas, such as brain drain and a lack of workforce. Overall, the participants of the focus groups discussed the positive and negative aspects of most of these aspects critically and, as such, added nuances to the existing literature based on the lived experiences of those directly or indirectly affected by migration in a diverse set of communities.

Cash and in-kind remittances

The role of remittances, the financial funds sent by migrants to their families and communities, in shaping the local development and well-being of households is a central theme that emerged from the in-depth discussions conducted in various MIGNEX research areas as already discussed above in the general perceptions section. This more in-depth analysis of the conversations around remittances sheds light on their multifaceted impacts, revealing their significance not only for individual recipients but also for the broader communities in which they are received.

The first prominent theme that emerged from the focus groups centres on the economic relief that remittances offer to recipient families. The narratives gathered from various MIGNEX research areas highlight how these financial inflows positively impact the well-being of recipients.

Families who receive remittances experience an improvement in their economic situation, leading to a direct enhancement of their standard of living. In some cases, the participants clarified that this is a crucial source of income for households in the local community.

There are people who lead their life through remittances. But this varies geographically, the majority of people in Kombolcha do not rely on remittances. In contrast, a few people and pastoralists that live in and around the town are mainly dependent on remittances. These families have funded the move through selling cattle's and depend on remittances to support their life. (Kombolcha, ETH1A)

Many families in my neighbourhood rely only on remittances to make ends meet. However, in rural Kombolcha, the reliance on remittances is particularly substantial. (Kombolcha, ETH1A)

Currently, many people in Baidoa city rely on people who migrated and left Baidoa in the early years, as they send money back to their families and friends. I can therefore say that migration is a good opportunity to support one's life, however, nowadays the youth are not migrating. (Baidoa, SOM2C)

Besides remittances funding basic daily needs, many participants also discussed remittances being used for the construction of houses, which positively impacts the development of the local area.

I also have the same idea that if families have migrants abroad and if they send money for their families here it would be good and if not then it would be bad. With money that people send back to their families, it will impact on the area positively because that money will be used for construction and flourishing of lives. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1D)

When you ask people who have constructed skyscrapers about their money, they will tell you that they have their family members abroad who are sending them money. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3C)

The economic relief of remittances also extends to entire communities, with the establishment of small and medium-sized businesses and factories often being attributed to remittances. The ability to invest in such ventures is seen as beneficial for these communities, creating a cycle of growth and development based on the support provided by migrants abroad. These insights underscore the profound role remittances play in driving development and enhancing living conditions within the sending communities.

For instance; people receive money and they invest in small and medium businesses in Shahrake Mahdia. Most of the existing factories in Shahrake Mahdia are from people who are not in Kabul and I think it is a good thing for our community. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3B)

In these discussions around remittances, some participants also differentiated between different destination countries. It is their understanding that migrants have varying abilities to send remittances depending on where they live and work. In addition, currency exchange rates and remittance sending fees were discussed as positive and negative aspects related to sending and receiving remittances.

People whose family members are in Iran also don't have a better life because the income from Iran is so low because it's a low value currency. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A)

Currently, it is the business that improves the situation in Jabrael. Families who have household members abroad receive money and work on that money for building houses and factories and expanding their business and this way activities are improved here. Families having migrants in other countries like European countries, their economy improved a lot more than those families who have migrants in Iran. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1D)

For example, my [family member] has moved to [a European country]. Of course, he makes money in euros and when he sends it here, we get more money. He was sending scholarships to me and one of my cousins during my university years. (Hopa, TUR1B)

There was an evident dominance of financial remittances in the discussions. Only in a very few instances did participants also mention in-kind remittances that were sent by migrants, mainly for community projects in this case.

It's a small number of emigrants that managed to send stuff for sporting associations, community associations, schools, kindergartens, some do help the island, but the majority don't. For instance, in Santo Antão, the association 'Jovens amigos de Paul' helped build Jardim Monteiro in São Nicolau. (São Nicolau, CPV1C)

The old time migrants in Italy contributed and bought an ambulance for the community clinic not the current ones. Also, at first when those in Europe return, they used to play football with their colleagues in the community and after that they contribute some money to buy some jerseys and football for the community. (New Takoradi, GHA3B)

Impacts on the local labour market

Migration has far-reaching implications for local labour markets in various research areas. These effects can be both negative and positive, shaping the workforce demographics and employment opportunities. We delve into the diverse dimensions of these impacts, from skills shortages and depopulation to the creation of jobs, knowledge transfer, and financial support within the context of migration.

According to the narratives of focus group participants, migration can result in the reduction of the local labour force and lead to challenges for the communities involved. One of the significant concerns is depopulation and the consequent loss of a productive workforce. When young, active individuals migrate, it often leaves behind a population primarily composed of children and the elderly, which can adversely affect the progress of a community.

As I mentioned before, we lose human force because the young people are the backbone of the country. These are the people who have the spirit of working but an elderly person cannot work rather than providing a piece of advice. This is a negative aspect. (Behsud, AFG2D)

Migration has negative effects on the person and on the country because the workforce is decreased in the country. Mostly workers and youth who are active people are leaving the country. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3D)

Migration has negative effects on the person and on the country because the workforce is decreased in the country. Mostly workers and youth who are active people are leaving the country. (Moyale, ETH3A)

Another problem is that it might lead to depopulation and loss of the most productive part of the community. When young people continue to migrate out of the community only children and the old will be left behind. This might affect the progress of the community. (Down Quarters, NGA1D)

It's not a good thing because 80-90% of the youths in Uromi have traveled out, so there is a brain drain and lack of manpower in Ekpoma. When you visit that community, you will only find old people. I believe the old men will travel out if they have the opportunity. Everybody travelling out is very bad for the community. (Epkoma, NGA3D)

It also adversely affects the community when those who provided job opportunities to others leave.

Mostly educated people migrate to other countries. This is therefore a bad thing for the area. For example, a factory owner may sell his factory and go outside the country due to the problems. But what about those who are working with him? His departure impacts others too. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3A)

Skills shortages are another negative outcome, particularly when individuals with specific vocational skills depart. Their absence can significantly decrease skilled labour, impacting the local market. Furthermore, the departure of educated and skilled individuals can lead to a loss of knowledge and expertise, which is vital for a thriving labour force. This is further discussed in the separate section below on brain drain, as this was a common theme throughout the discussions.

There was a Motorcycle mechanic who would fix motorbikes in a way that you would think you have got a new motorbike from the company. He left the shop and went to [European country]. This has put this community in problems. He is working there as a Motorbike mechanic now. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3A)

Some people are very useful to the community but when they migrate out, they may never come back. You can also see that this is also a setback to the community, as the contributions which they would have made towards the growth of the community are taken when they migrate. (Down Quarters, NGA1C)

Again, if those who have vocational skills decide to migrate out of this area to other places, what it means is that there would be a shortage of persons with such types of skill in the community. This mightily negatively impact on our community. (Down Quarters, NGA1C)

Returnees who migrated abroad and later returned often compete for jobs, which can intensify job market competition for non-migrants, making it harder for them to secure employment.

The negative impact of migration is that, returnees become a burden to the town. They are taking jobs that might otherwise be available to non-migrants. (Kombolcha, ETH1A)

However, not all narratives around migration and the local labour market were negative. Migration can also bring about positive changes in local

labour markets, creating opportunities and growth for communities. One notable benefit is the return of migrants who choose to reinvest in their hometowns. These individuals may establish businesses, such as hotels, cafes, and manufacturing enterprises, which contribute to job creation within the community. While the investments of migrants and the skills they acquire are discussed in separate sections, this is relevant in the context of this section as they often hire local workers, providing employment opportunities and boosting the local economy.

Yeah, for example when they got back here, they get organized with other youth and start some business from which a community can get a benefit. They may even don't need credit from the credit and saving institution or bank. So, there is a possibility of creating a job opportunity using the money they get from working abroad as initial capital and start a business when they return back home. So, in this way, it is good for the town and the community. (Batu, ETH2C)

I also think migration helps the entire community and not just the individual. When we consider e-commerce for instance, when one travels and gets to acquire some knowledge and expertise in this field, he can return and establish his own business and then employ a lot of the youth who do not have anything to do. (Golf City, GHA2B)

It has been good in some ways. The rich ones have gotten richer but created local employment opportunities here by investing the money they have earned here. (Chot Dheeran, PAK1B)

When one leaves and goes to a different country, you get to see business opportunities on what is lacking in Baidoa that is needed and that you are able to provide as a result of having access to where one is. So, then the person comes back and opens a business and employs people as well as supporting the family members left behind by sending them money to support themselves. (Baidoa, SOM2B)

In Kombolcha (ETH1), participants also discussed this in relation to immigration to the area, not just about emigration. In the area, migrants have created job opportunities, which have benefitted the community.

There is a benefit. For example, a person who moved from another location has opened a salt business. He provided a job opportunity for unemployed youth in my community while still paying taxes to the government. (Kombolcha, ETH1A)

A person who migrates to Kombolcha may be able to create job for others. Many people moved to Kombolcha has created jobs for the young people. (Kombolcha, ETH1B)

One interesting aspect that a participant in (TUN1A) mentioned in the framework of these discussions is that (return) migrants who create job opportunities need to be mindful of the business community. If they pay their employees significantly more than local businesses, this could cause tensions.

One guy who migrated came back here to build a factory that makes olive wood cutlery. It employs mostly women from here but the salaries are not good. He can't pay them better salaries because other factory owners would not appreciate it. (Enfidha, TUN1A)

In summary, the impact of migration on local labour markets encompasses both negative and positive outcomes. While migration can lead to depopulation, skills shortages, and workforce competition, it can also result in job creation, knowledge transfer, and financial stability within communities. The effects are contingent on individual migrants, their skills, and the circumstances of their migration and return, shaping the dynamics of local labour markets.

Skills acquisition and innovation

The phenomenon of emigration not only involves the departure of individuals but also raises questions about the impact of their acquired skills and knowledge on their communities of origin. In the focus group discussions, our participants shared insights into the potential for skills acquisition and innovation stemming from emigrants. While the discussions presented diverse perspectives, some common themes emerged.

Firstly, participants discussed the chances that migration opens to learn new skills and gain new qualifications, which might not be available in the community of origin.

In migration, if people learn to use new technologies and then implement them back here would be a very positive thing. On the other hand, it would be very helpful for the country if young people pursue higher education from foreign countries. For example, a Master degree earned in Afghanistan is quite different then the similar degree provided by a foreign nation. As a result, it would help bring new and updated knowledge to our country. (Behsud, AFG2A)

I would say that migration has another benefit, for example, when there are no facilities such as technology in your hometown but when you move to another place or country, you can learn many skills and crafts there, which is a plus point of the migration. For example, someone told me that he learnt the brickwork in Pakistan, another person said that he learnt plasterwork in Karachi, Pakistan or another person has learnt the construction work in Iran. (Behsud, AFG2C)

When you immigrate to a different country, one learns new skills and interacts with different cultures, different languages and different societies. This then results in newfound skills, and a desire to improve the situation in your country as a result of what you have learnt while living among different people. (Baidoa, SOM2B)

Some participants acknowledged that emigrants who acquire new skills and knowledge abroad have the potential to bring innovation back to their hometowns. Across different regions, there was a recognition that individuals who learn new crafts and expertise while living in foreign countries can contribute positively to their home communities.

Yes. I have one or two friends who are phone repairers. They travelled and went to acquire some expertise. When they returned, they established a small office which deals in phone repairs and they have engaged some young people as apprentices. (Golf City, GHA2B)

These acquired skills can have a tangible impact on the communities. Participants in various regions cited examples of emigrants who returned to their home areas and introduced innovative construction methods, tools,

and technologies. This not only transformed local industries but also improved living conditions for residents.

My uncle spent 40 years between Ireland and France... he brought plasterboard, a type of construction that was not known here... he returned to his country and brought something... a different type of construction, ... tools that he brings... basically those people that work with him in Ribeira Brava started learning all the stuff, more modern, different work system... thanks to emigration other things change here in Cape Verde. (São Nicolau, CPV1D)

These innovations were not limited to construction alone but encompassed various fields, from agriculture to healthcare. Introducing new machinery and tools by returning migrants contributed to economic growth and improvements in various sectors.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the potential for innovation through emigration is not always perceived as straightforward. While there are cases where emigrants bring back new skills and knowledge, participants also highlighted the need for the right conditions to enable this transfer of expertise. In some cases, individuals who returned with innovative ideas faced challenges in implementing them due to various constraints.

I went to Iran and somehow benefited my family. I went there to work and learned many things. I would have not learned something if I had stayed here I have learned many things in Iran but I don't have the opportunity to apply it here. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3A)

Whoever invests loses as well. If I go study, for instance, I can go obtain my degree and come back, but I don't get a job on my field, nothing related. (São Nicolau, CPV1C)

Some have gone abroad and then came back to invest their money here... but he faced many difficulties. (Enfidha, TUN1B)

In summary, the potential for skills acquisition and innovation through emigration is evident in the narratives, and focus group participants across most research areas mentioned something in this regard. In their view, emigrants can learn new skills, acquire knowledge, and introduce innovative ideas to their communities. However, realising this potential requires the right conditions.

Injection of investment capital

The phenomenon of emigration not only involves the departure of individuals but also raises questions about the impact of their financial gains on their communities and countries of origin. In the focus group discussions, our participants shared insights into the potential for investment capital injection stemming from emigrants. While the discussions presented diverse perspectives, some common themes emerged.

Some participants acknowledged the potential for individuals who migrated to become financially successful abroad and return to their hometowns to invest. Across different regions, there was a notion that returning migrants

might use their wealth for local investment, creating employment and benefiting the area's development.

One positive point can be that the person who migrated may become rich and return to the town and do investment which will be good for the town. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

For instance, a local guy who is an emigrant has an investment here, I don't even know if he will be able to finish it... a hotel, small one, 24 bedrooms, that's a good investment for the island, it will create jobs, so I think it's a good thing for the island. (São Nicolau, CPV1A)

Migration, in my opinion, has a positive impact on the city. People who have returned from overseas construct shopping malls and multipurpose structures. Some returns laid the groundwork for the town's development; in fact, migration has aided Kombolcha. Many wealthy individuals invested their money and expertise in Kombolcha. (Kombolcha, ETH1D)

[Migration] has been good in some ways. The rich ones have gotten richer but created local employment opportunities here by investing the money they have earned here. (Chot Dheeran, PAK1B)

It has a favourable influence because most migrants have invested in tangible assets like businesses, hotels, and the establishment of new businesses that do not exist in Baidoa. (Baidoa, SOM2B)

There are people who went abroad a long time ago that have positively impacted Baidoa. Those buildings in town belong to them, so these people are people who have already left the country. They made money abroad and are investing it in their country. An example being the owner of this hotel. We have a number of them who come back and invest here and come often to check on their investments. They have contributed financially and materially to this city and to their family's wellbeing. (Baidoa, SOM2B)

Some migrants reinvested their money in Enfidha. For instance, there was a Go-Karting centre and a resort planned for Takrouna. A Tunisian investor was behind the project but it was put on hold due to Covid. (Enfidha, TUN1C)

Participants also highlighted how the private sector had contributed to the growth of clinics, schools, and other facilities in the area, highlighting the importance of such transfers for infrastructure development. Some participants also discussed that money for investments comes from different parts of the world.

For example, persons currently residing in the United States, as well as others who have returned to the area, are constructing schools in my Kebele. (Kombolcha, ETH1B)

Yes it is good thing if the person leaves Baidoa, because the people who are doing investment in Baidoa are the people who left before and came back with a reason. They brought many things that were not known in Baidoa, such as businesses. The universities in Baidoa were opened by graduates from other countries who originally are from Baidoa town. (Baidoa, SOM2A)

When we returned from Iran, we did not have a hospital in this area. There was only one female doctor. But thank God, we have two to three private clinics and a government clinic. There are a lot of schools now. This area

has developed a lot and local residents have played an important role in this ... Many think that all the investment is made with the money earned in Iran. This is not true. A lot of investment is made with the money received from other countries such as Australia and Germany. I feel if the security situation gets better, Shahrake Jabrael will develop even more. We have a water purification machine in this area. People have dug water wells and taken water to the purification machine. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1C)

Some discussions emphasised the importance of migrants using their financial resources creatively in their home countries. Participants suggested that individuals who had saved money abroad could establish businesses or factories, thereby contributing to local economic development if conditions allowed. However, they also acknowledged that this might not be so easy in some contexts.

There are some who went abroad and then came back to invest their money here. A cousin of mine went to [European country]. He got an award for the best cake in the world. He came back here and wanted to start a project but he faced many difficulties. (Enfidha, TUN1B)

Migrants should use their creativity in their own country to make it even better. When there is security in the country and someone has money, they should invest it in their own country. I know people who have gone abroad, saved money there and have established a factory or business. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3D)

There were also calls for a sense of collective responsibility among emigrants. Some participants expressed concerns that migrants were spending a significant portion of their earnings abroad rather than investing in their home country, implying a perceived selfishness of emigrants. In addition, there was a desire for a more strategic use of emigrant resources for the nation's benefit and participants encouraged individuals to consider investing in their hometowns and communities rather than focusing solely on personal gain abroad. They argued that emigrants had the potential to play a pivotal role in developing their home regions.

Unless we all live our lives, we're also act selfishly towards our hometown, we think just about personal satisfaction... if you emigrate just for you to have a better life, it's good for you, but if you want to emigrate to come back and invest, well, come to help your community I think it's something positive. Abroad you have more opportunities, a chance for you to come help here... though most of the people they go they just think about themselves and their family. However, they complain that the island is not developing, that we don't have this and that. They can, for instance, found an association to... look for investors, help the island, send some sort of support, they don't do that, they only complain by saying it's not like that elsewhere. The point is "What are you guys doing for the island?" (São Nicolau, CPV1C)

If you weren't crazy Cape Verde would be on another level, because he said with all the money earned by emigrants abroad, if they had invested in Cape Verde or if they haven't spent it all abroad, it would be rewarding for Cape Verde but... he said that Cape Verdeans spend a lot of money abroad. (Boa Vista, CPV2A)

Finally, a few participants talked critically about a lack of investments by migrants in their area of origin. For example, one respondent in Hopa,

Turkey, said 'I observe that the social ties and family ties of those who migrated abroad have decreased. They don't care much about investment and aid.' (Hopa, TUR1B) Others echoed this, mentioning that migrants forget and, as mentioned before, rather spend in the country of destination. Again, this highlights the importance of engagement with diaspora members to facilitate investments and not assume they are automatically attractive for all migrants.

Returnees have opened hotels and other businesses in their homelands. However, they are extremely rare, with just one out of every hundred being migrant. The majority of migrants, on the other hand, put money into their families and improved their circumstances. (Kombolcha, ETH1C)

Since some have their families in the community, when they return, they only come to visit but not to stay in the community. As for the matter of investment, that is zero percent. (New Takoradi, GHA3B)

Overall, these discussions underscore the potential for emigrants to play a significant role in injecting investment capital into their communities and countries. The challenge lies in striking a balance between personal aspirations and a commitment to collective well-being, encouraging emigrants to consider the lasting impact their financial resources can have on their hometowns and nations.

Brain drain

The emigration of educated and skilled individuals, is a phenomenon with far-reaching implications. While the links between education and migration are further discussed in the following section, brain drain has significant economic consequences in the communities of origin. It has been discussed among academics and policy-makers for many years. It is an issue also discussed in several focus groups across different MIGNEX research areas. This allows us to understand how people in areas affected by migration see the issue and what the impacts in relation to development are in their view.

Participants from diverse backgrounds shared their perspectives, with recurring themes resonating throughout the discussions. The first narrative revolves around the dual nature of what some of them referred to as brain drain. While participants recognised the personal benefits of migration and potential positive outcomes for household members, they were equally attuned to its adverse effects on the homeland. In São Nicolau (CPV1C), a participant noted, "When you're thinking just about yourself, you don't care about where you were born. ... we lose a brain, an arm to help, less people to pay taxes ..." This sentiment was echoed elsewhere, emphasising the tension between individual aspirations and collective well-being and development in the country of origin.

Directly related, a second point discussed in several research areas is the negative impact of brain drain on local development. The loss of skilled individuals who could contribute to their communities and countries was a common refrain. For example, participants discussed the government's investment in education, only to lose those individuals to emigration and the changes in communities because of large volumes of emigration.

It definitely has a negative impact on the region. There were a lot of smart and capable people who left Redeyef. The government invested in their education and have now lost them. The impact is very negative. (Redeyef, TUN2C)

Some participants also focused their discussion on the role of youth and their role in development. In this context brain drain also came up. In Moyale (ETH3A), for example, it was emphasised that a country without its youth would have a bleak future. The departure of young individuals was seen as a significant disadvantage.

Yes, migration has harmed the town of Moyale. It is a brain drain for the country and for the town. This country is going to be developed by youths. A country which does not have youths, its future is not bright. So to develop and to step forward the country, the contribution of youths is high. So, if youths migrate out of the town or from the country, the disadvantage dominates the advantage. (Moyale, ETH3A)

These perspectives underscore the complexity of brain drain, highlighting the juxtaposition of personal aspirations against the broader interests of one's homeland. The discussions consistently emphasised the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon and its profound impact on communities and countries alike.

Migration and tourism

A topic not discussed as much as the others covered in this section on the economic consequences of migration is the role of migrants in the development of tourism. In areas where tourism is a relevant sector, the discussions revolved around the intertwined dynamics of migration and the tourism industry. These areas see tourism as an opportunity for the younger generation and see it linked to migration in different ways. Participants' voices from different research areas where these issues were discussed, primarily in Cabo Verde but also in Ghana, Nigeria and Tunisia, provide interesting views of these complex interrelations.

The most commonly discussed link between migration and tourism is the fact that migrants return to their communities to spend holidays, mainly in the summer. In some research areas, this is notable and profoundly impacts the local community. Their presence revitalises the local economy, as they often contribute to increased consumer spending and boost businesses, from local shops to restaurants. Some migrants also choose to return to nearby places, not the research area. However, respondents also recognised that these return visits, in many cases, are linked to still having an active link to the community of origin. Close family members staying back as well as owning a house at the origin make it more likely that emigrants stay connected to the community in some way.

So, for the emigrants, São Nicolau is just a place for holidays ... For party. They come to see their family as well, party, they miss their hometown as well. During summer, we say "oh Emigrants are coming", we notice how villages get busier, parties, [Giggles]. (São Nicolau, CPV1A)

During summer, Redeyef is a completely different town thanks to all the returning migrants visiting the area. ... you see an incredible amount of

foreign licence plates from all the countries driving around. It stimulates the economy as well. (Redeyef, TUN2A)

My father, he comes every year for holidays. But his brothers almost don't come. They used to. There's one issue here. You usually come more often when you have a mother or father alive here, or you get a girlfriend or wife. But usually, when the parents die, they come less often and then they stop coming. It's been more or less 20 years since they came. And some, I doubt they will come before they die. It's not likely. I think they will die in Europe before they come to Cabo Verde. (São Nicolau, CPV1B)

Sometimes, but not always. Some of them are in Mali and Ivory Coast. We go and pay visits to them, or they send their children to the village on holiday. There are a couple of families who are in France and sometimes they also come back for holidays. All these people haven't built houses in Dialakoro, but some of them have buildings in Kankan or in Conakry. (Dialakoro, GIN2A)

As discussed in the Injection of investment capital section, participants also discussed the role of migrants in developing the tourism sector. In addition, there was also mention of migrants raising awareness of places that then lead to tourism. A respondent in Ekpoma, Nigeria, explained this as follows:

Talking about tourism, Ekpoma is a very good site for that. There are a lot of students who come from far places and when they return, they mention the good hangout spots in Ekpoma. A lot of people who come here want to go out and check out cool places especially this particular place called Dublous. People want to go there to snap pictures, to look around, to eat food, and buy things. You can do virtually everything there. You can just go there and chill with a bottle of drink. Things like this sell very well in Ekpoma and people are making good money. (Ekpoma, NGA3D)

Some participants also discussed young individuals going abroad for specialised training in hospitality and tourism. This is promising, however, participants said they often choose not to return home. Still, there is optimism that opportunities may arise for returning youth to establish tourist attractions within their communities. This would have positive impacts in the broader community:

Even here in Cabo Verde, we send 10 young people for Hospitality and tourism School in Praia, none of them come back. (São Nicolau, CPV1C)

There is hope because if for instance I have it in mind to travel abroad and return to establish a tourist attraction in the community, it will benefit the community since we would have people trooping in to experience the tourist attraction we have in Golf City as well and not only distant places like the Cape Coast. (Golf City, GHA2D)

In São Nicolau, Cabo Verde (CPV1A), a participant lamented that young people, despite having studied abroad, were hesitant to return to invest in the tourism sector due to transportation challenges. A paradox emerges: while the sector offers promise, transport limitations deter local youth from returning to exploit these opportunities. This indicates untapped opportunities because of lacking infrastructure or more general opportunity structures in the community. This means that to get the most positive impacts from migration, countries of origin also need to make investments.

However, I think there is a need to change the transport connections. Our young folks are living in different islands, for instance, a young man from here, who studied abroad, went to Boa Vista to invest in the tourism industry, he's not coming back because of the transport connections, our fellow citizens want to come here but they don't because of a feeble transport connections. (São Nicolau, CPV1A)

Further challenges concerning tourism and links to migration were also discussed. Conversations in São Nicolau, Cabo Verde pointed to a shift in the local workforce. Historically linked to fishing and agriculture, the population has grown more skilled and sought different, better-paying employment avenues. This has led to internal migration to other islands, where tourism as a sector is already much more developed. This transition led to a perceived reduction in the vibrancy of night activities in their home regions, signifying a broader shift in the local economy.

I think that what kept people here before was the fisheries and agriculture, but now they are more skilled and they do not want to work in those areas, so they end up going, for example, to the island of Sal, to work in the hotel business and tourism, because it's a different and better paid job. That's why the night fun went backwards because São Nicolau and Tarrafal before had a much greater dynamic, mainly at night time. (São Nicolau, CPV1B)

Overall, these discussions reflect the intricate relationship between migration and the tourism industry, where the attraction of better employment opportunities and the potential for local development often intersect with the challenges associated with local skill utilisation, youth aspirations and emigration. The emergence of young entrepreneurs willing to make a difference in their communities through tourism and training abroad is an encouraging sign of the sector's promise and the evolving landscape of migration trends.

Education

Education is critical in shaping children's and adults' lives (Harrington, 2016; Hatton, 2017; Thomas, 2016). Regional economic communities in Africa and other regional initiatives recognise the value of education in supporting socio-economic development at the national and sub-national levels (ILO, 2020). Migration has been positively associated with the improvement of access to education through the use of remittance receipts to pay for the cost of education. Low-income migrant households spend a significant proportion of remittances on primary, secondary and sometimes tertiary education of children who stay back as well as external family dependents. In some cases, these receipts allow migrant households to afford better quality education from private schools, which are usually better equipped than most government-run schools. Daily upkeep, health and education account for the bulk of remittance use (McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021; Gnimassoun and Anyanwu, 2019). The value of education in promoting higher socio-economic status and a better quality of life is appreciated by families, including lower middle-class and working-class people who invest in education in spite of their relatively meagre earnings (World Bank, 2021; Teye, Badasu and Yeboah, 2017). Broadly, education is also linked to the acquisition of language proficiency, which benefits individuals, including

those who do not migrate but who turn to interact or transact business with immigrants or cross-border traders.

MIGNEX
Background
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Attitudes towards education and the role of remittances

A cross-section of participants in the focus group discussions noted the growing appreciation of the importance of education to support future livelihood opportunities and the investment of limited household funds to pay for the costs of education. This is assessed to be true even for lower-income households. In addition, the receipt of remittances is associated with greater access to education.

The residents of Jabrael are highly interested in education that they continue their education; on the other hand, the people who came to Jabrael from remote villages and other provinces are even more interested in education than the people here...Even the parents with low-income level would still send their children to kindergarten to make them ready for school and education. They are all interested as far as they can afford. There are kindergarten classes for younger kids who are not at the age of going to school and to keep and look after the kids of the parents who are workers outside. The kindergartens take 4000 AFN per a month and there are parents who only earns 300 AFN on a daily basis but still they send their children to kindergarten in order to prepare them for schools and a brighter future. Jabrael's residents are much interested in education and they send their children to school, university and higher degrees as much as they can afford. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A)

It will be helpful if an educated person from this town is engaged in trade. For example, I am an educated person, and I can speak so many languages. I can speak English, Afan Oromo, Kismayu (language of Kenya). I can speak Swahili and communicate if I get a person who can speak only Swahili. Similarly, I can communicate with Afan Oromo and English speakers. Which makes easy doing business for me. (Kombolcha, ETH1B)

If I have the opportunity to recommend any option to the youth, I will recommend education, this is because all spheres of life is incorporated in education. So, the youth must attend school whilst identifying their individual natural talents in the various sectors of learning so that they will flow and flourish very well in their individual sectors. So, I will advise that the youth should seek education more than any other thing else. Because if they go through education and they become farmers, their level of production will be more than those without education. (Gbane, GHA1A)

It would have been best if all the people of Gbani will embrace education and ensure that their children attain good level of education. For instance, if we had been to school, we would have known how to use the chemicals for mining and we will be able to extract the gold better and even when we are given instructions, we will be able to understand it better and utilize them well at our workplaces. (Gbane, GHA1A)

Earlier on, it was alluded to that Shaanxi, the big mining company is here in this community yet, the majority of the youth in Gbane are not employed. I think the cause of this problem is that many of the youth are not well educated, so their level of education is low. If the youth had gone to school to the highest level, they would have gotten better jobs with Shaanxi. They would even been working in the offices. But because they have not been educated, those who have been employed by Shaanxi do not have any good position in the company other than go down into the shaft to

mine. So, I think that education is very useful to the youth in Gbane.
(Gbane, GHA1A)

There was this notion at first that those who are not educated are the ones who go into professions like hairdressing, tailoring among others and that is like a category of work for the uneducated ones. But these days, due to the increase in the level of education, if one wants to learn how to become a makeup artist and has not completed SHS, he or she will not be picked. For instance, the work of a beautician requires that she reads the instructions on a product label before administering it to the client. If you are not able to do so, you will not be able to use the product on your client and that tells you how important education is. If it was free back then like it is now, we all would have enrolled to be educated at least. (Golf City, GHA2B)

First, there is a lot of change in the educational sector. In the past many residents of Down Quarters did not attach a lot of value to education. This mentality has now changed. Our parents now know the importance of education. Every parent these days wants their children to go to school and acquire education. In fact, there is no house you will go to today in Down Quarters that you will not find a graduate of secondary school or those who have finished polytechnics, colleges of education or even university. Even among the children they have developed a strong desire for western education. Once it is daybreak, you find them preparing to go to school without anyone prompting them to do so. These days in some of the households some children engage in petty jobs so they can raise money and sponsor themselves to schools without depending on their parents to pay for their school expenses. (Down Quarters, NGA1A)

With migration Chot Dheeran gets positive impacts collectively because migrants help their relatives in education, and they even help their poor relatives to establish small businesses. In this way, the whole village is making progress. (Chot Dheeran, PAK1B)

Okay, I mean, I think that something you can't buy with money is going to university. I studied at Balıkesir [another close city to Yenice/Çanakkale] University. It will add a lot to you, go to university. Well, get out of this shell. We always tell the children about the other type of life. (Enfidha, TUN1A)

Moreover, migration enables migrants to access high-quality formal education abroad. Migrants who have secondary and tertiary education prior to their migration enrol in formal in-person or virtual education programmes as a means of improving their human capital characteristics. Others acquire technical and vocational skills which are invaluable upon return. The pursuit of higher education opens access to skilled employment opportunities abroad for some migrants, while others utilise their qualifications to apply for highly remunerated job opportunities at home upon return. However, there is the perception that the lure of migration to more developed countries or communities has the propensity to invariably deny origin communities of potentially educated citizens who could have supported socio-economic development in their home communities. Similarly, negative outcomes are said to be associated with uneducated migrants who arrive in communities without productive skills.

... the people are educated but they cannot find a job for themselves, as well as the economic situation of the people is bad. Therefore, they should migrate in order to make some money there, learn a craft and technical

skills. For example, those who have returned from Pakistan know different kinds of skills which they have utilized here. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

A student would continue his/her studies with a lot of enthusiasm 12 years ago. They thought that if they study, they will be able to accomplish big things. Unfortunately, those who studied moved from Shahrake Jabrael and did not return back. They went to Kabul and European countries. I have a friend [omitted to preserve confidentiality] who is my age. He was a university scholar. He now pursues his PHD in Germany. Students of Shahrake Jabrael are not able to see or visit him. Another one got his Masters in Computer Science but students of Shahrake Jabrael did not see him. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1C)

I would also recommend young people to migrate, however it has some negative points but it also has positive points as well. For example, for education, learning new skills and crafts. Therefore, I recommend young people to migrate in order to learn education and new skills and crafts there because the education level is lower here. (Behsud, AFG2A)

When educated and competent people move to Kombolcha, they will bring with them fresh knowledge, technology, and ideas that will aid the town's development. When low-skilled, uneducated people relocate to Kombolcha, in contrast, it has a detrimental influence on the town and its residents, as it raises the cost of living, rents, congests the city, and has an environmental impact. (Kombolcha, ETH1B)

I would say education is a very positive thing because it is good for the individual to be educated. When one is educated, he is able to get employed. The other option is for migration where if one is not able to make it here, he can migrate and make a living elsewhere. Furthering your education is beneficial because it will help you to be able to fit wherever you find yourself with regards to reading and writing. (New Takoradi, GHA3A)

Migration inhibiting educational aspirations

Conversely, our study participants argue that migration sometimes interferes with people's educational aspirations by curtailing burgeoning interest in educational pursuits. According to our research participants, the thrill of economic rewards in destination countries through the acceptance of menial jobs either dissuades migrants from realising their educational aspirations altogether or compels them to postpone their aspirations long enough for those aspirations to become stale and unrealisable. In addition, some research participants expressed their belief that in a conservative society, it is the duty of the male figure to ensure that good manners and the interest in pursuing education are instilled in younger siblings. The absence of such 'role models' through international migration is sometimes associated with immorality and social vices by younger family members who forfeit the guidance of responsible older family members.

Migration causes a person to get behind in education. When you migrate, your economic situation gets worse, so when you have a weak economic situation, then you cannot get educated because you have to work and support your family. (Behsud, AFG2A)

When my brother graduated from the school, I was really happy for him and told him to start engineering. First, he should get ready and attend the public university entrance. If he enters the governmental universities, that

would be good but if he couldn't make it to enter into governmental universities, then he should start engineering in private universities. He told us ok but later on we got informed that he has left for abroad. He left with my sister and they both migrated abroad. So, we had a lot of hopes for him that he would become an engineer and when he becomes an engineer, he would definitely work and serve for the country. (Behsud, AFG2A)

Young people have an influence on their households. For example, I am a young person and I have influence on my household, children, nephews and younger brothers because I am matured and I can differentiate between good and bad. Therefore, I take them to the school, madrasas and I guide them in every aspect of life but if I migrate abroad, then they will become vulgar and ignorant people as there will be no person to guide them. It has both negative and positive aspects. The negative aspect is that when a young person moves abroad, their younger family members choose bad ways, for example, they get drug addicted as they will have communications with drug addicted people, as well as they will be left behind in education and thus they will become illiterate but if that young person should not migrate to abroad, he will take care of his family. (Behsud, AFG2A)

Furthermore, return migration is associated with a reduction in the desire to pursue higher education when returnees do not perceive existing education systems to be viable or consider that the value of education does not help to secure an employment opportunity in the origin community.

For example, when we were living in Pakistan, my brother was one of the talented students in the class but when we returned here, he was not interested in his lessons and the school. We tried a lot that he should get well educated but he said that he is no more interested in getting educated. (Behsud, AFG2A)

I think our young people are wasted in this country. In my opinion, we are actually doing something wrong. We direct our children only to education. We are obsessed with their education. In my opinion, we have a tremendous occupation loss. (Kilis, TUR3B)

Education as a catalyst for migration

According to the focus group participants, education paves the way for aspiring migrants to be able to embark on migration. The migration culture among the youth sometimes motivates families to invest in education and skills acquisition through vocational training and apprenticeships or the pursuit of professional courses such as nursing with the express intention of enhancing their chances of international migration and access to employment opportunities abroad (Heering et al., 2004). We observed some inter-generational preferences for migration which shape the decision of the youth to embark on migration.

Good for the person. As my colleague said hmm...folks who have a degree, they can thrive abroad. For instance, my relatives, my uncle, my dad's brother, he emigrated and then took his family with him and my cousins, who live in Holland, they are a story of success. (São Nicolau, CPV1A)

I think migration is good and I will classify it into two: the educational and skills aspects. When an educated person gets the opportunity to travel outside the country, it is good because it enables the person to go there and

acquire more knowledge and experience which the person can in turn use in helping his home country. For the skills aspect, if I perhaps get trained in the field of being an electrician, I can travel outside the country and use this skill to gain employment over there. (Golf City, GHA2B)

I learnt before one travels to the UK, you need to have a certificate or a vocational skill which will earn you a job. (New Takoradi, GHA3A)

Parents should allow their children make good career choices like nursing. Graduates from nursing do not struggle to get a job because there are a lot of opportunities. There are opportunities to work on their own and work with others or even to go abroad. (Down Quarters, NGA1A)

For me anyone leaving Down Quarters should have something that will help him/her like education or a skill. He/she should not go out there and be a liability. (Down Quarters, NGA1A)

These improvements have enhanced the level of education as well and have changed how people see the world. More people are moving to further their education in Erigavo and that also affects the migration of the community. (Erigavo, SOM1A)

Of course, we do! It's good to have a degree when migrating Yes! It would eventually help with migration. And not just classroom education. Technical and professional training are recommended it. One should learn a trade. (Enfidha, TUN1A)

Even in cases where international migration is perceived to be beyond the reach of locals, education is still deemed a worthwhile investment to guarantee future sustainable earnings. As such, the desire for 'quick money' is bemoaned as robbing the youth of less risky and more stable sources of earnings in the future.

According to [Participant name], education would have been good for the youth in the community. However, there have been hinderances and the biggest hindrance is the galamsey [small scale illegal mining] business the youth engage in. They go to school and at some point, they drop out of school and rush to the bush in search of gold which will earn them money. This is a big challenge that the community is experiencing today but they think that education would have been a very good thing for them. (Gbane, GHA1A)

Those who are going into mining too, if they had gone to school to learn about mining, they will not be treated as second class human beings. So, if they go to school, they will be more productive in the factory, in construction, commerce, mining, farming and even if they migrate to other places, they will be more productive. (Gbane, GHA1A)

No, it is not exactly the case, some of the girls also start misbehaving the moment they begin developing breasts, they start going after the men who have the money from the mines and drop out of school, so, the mining activities in the community have contributed to the children not going to school even though there are schools now in the community. (Gbane, GHA1A)

Dilemma on the true value of education

Local employment opportunities are sometimes not based on one's educational qualifications but rather on one's social networks. The concept

of “who you know” is prevalent among some communities, and the power of referrals by people from one’s own clan, ethnic group or extended social contacts is deemed more influential than one’s education. However, participants noted that such localised social network opportunities limit one’s ability to access employment opportunities abroad or outside one’s immediate community.

What I have realized is that in most European countries when you go to seek for employment, they ask for your qualification but here in Ghana they ask you who sent you and that makes it more of whom you know. (New Takoradi, GHA3A)

Sometimes you may find that some youth have a very tough time finding jobs even though they are who are highly academic and educated from other countries, while others who cannot write and read have good jobs due to their relationships and connections in the offices where the job is presented. So, the accessibility in this area is that the job opportunity is based on clan and colleagues, so if your clan is very strong you will access good jobs, but if it is weak then you will never get a good job, even if you are overqualified. According to me I think a person who has a good qualification is the best for a certain job, but if they can’t get a job in a certain area then they will move to another area and find a good job. But those who access good jobs with no qualification would not be able to get better jobs anywhere else. But in Baidoa jobs depend on who you know, not what you know. (Baidoa, SOM2A)

No, it is difficult to get a job in Baidoa even if you have a double bachelor's degree; you see people with secondary certificates working for UN agencies with no qualifications, and those who are qualified are just loitering around the city from corridor to corridor. As long as you have a relative holding high position in a humanitarian organization or government, then you will be able to get a job whether qualified or not. It is about who you know here and not what you know. (Baidoa, SOM2A)

We feel like there is no place for us whether we have finished our studies or not. For example, a young kid who sees his older brother finishing his studies and remaining unemployed can never develop himself. He will believe that education is useless since he will never find a job. There are many problems. My brother was a very excellent student but has suddenly dropped out of school. I wanted to talk with him about it. He told me that I of all people don’t have the right to talk to him about studies. He said that I graduated 14 years ago and I’m still unemployed... (Enfidha, TUN1A)

Health

Migration impacts health directly and indirectly throughout the different nodes in a migration cycle. Historically, migration has been associated with the spread of communicable diseases, including leprosy, the plague, cholera, smallpox, and yellow fever, among others. In contemporary times, migration has also been linked to the spread of the Ebola Virus Disease and COVID-19 (Peters et al., 1994; Carballo and Nerukar, 2001). The migration of people from an epidemic to a non-epidemic area could introduce diseases to disease-naïve communities. With industrialisation, the volume, rapidity and diversity of international migration have made it almost impossible to limit or prevent the spread of diseases. Globally, there is an uneven distribution of health conditions, with many diseases being over-represented among some

populations, especially mobile populations. As such, the health determinants are associated with movement across prevalence gaps of disease and health. Importantly, health is a critical component of human security and development (Olumuyiwa and Adepoju, 2022; Siegel, 2020; Siegel, 2021). Migration is also associated with the transfer of remittances that are used to facilitate access to quality healthcare and the transmission of health-promoting behaviours (social remittances) to family members at the origin as well as weaker social ties. This has real implications for the health condition of those who stay behind. According to IOM (2017), the bidirectional relationship between migration and health remains poorly understood, and action on migration and health remains limited, negatively impacting not only those who migrate but also sending, receiving, and 'left-behind' communities. The nexus between migration and health could be analysed across four key phases (Rickravage et al., 2018) – pre-departure, movement, arrival, and return (Figure 2).

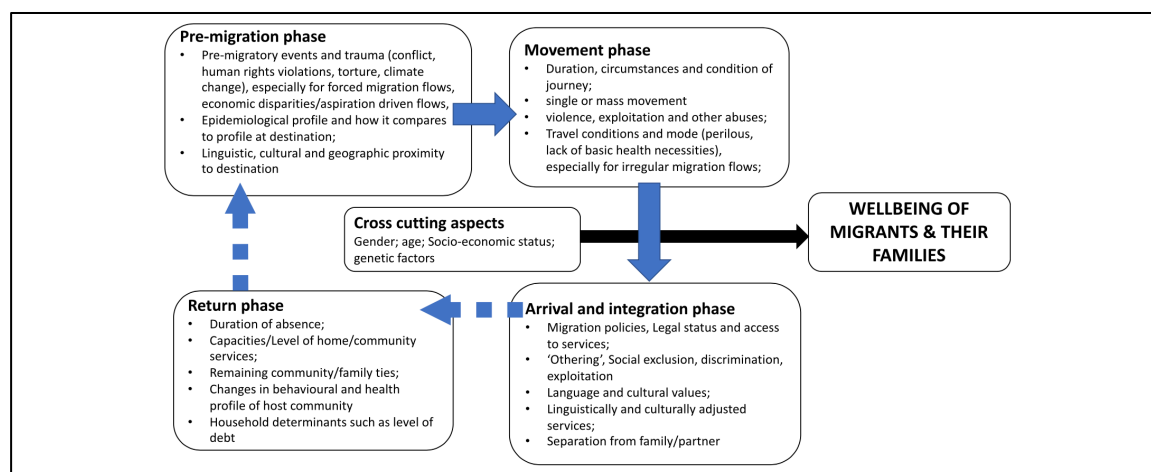


Figure 2. Four phases of migration and health implications

Source: Rickravage et al. (2018:3)

The pre-departure phase is characterised by existing or prevailing health conditions in the origin community, which predispose the migrant to infection prior to their migration. The availability, access and quality of healthcare infrastructure in origin countries could either mediate or exacerbate the health risks. In the transportation phase, the modern speed of travel has significantly reduced the travel times as well as the contact period among travellers. The limited contact period reduces the risk of infection by diseases that manifest themselves through prolonged contact. However, the rapidity of travel is equally associated with the expedited spread of airborne communicable diseases such as Bird Flu (Avian Influenza). Moreover, irregular migrants, especially victims of human smuggling and trafficking, are at a heightened risk of infections when they are compelled to rely on unsafe blood transfusion, alternative medicines, poor dietary conditions and unsanitary conditions. There is also the risk of rape and other sexual abuses that expose victims to diseases.

In the post-arrival phase, there are adverse health implications when migrants indulge in behaviours different from those at home. Social norms that guide and regulate behaviour in origin communities could be abandoned, and migrants sometimes engage in stigmatised professions such as sex work, which would have been frowned upon in their home communities. Risky behaviours by migrants could expose them to new infections as well as lead to the infection of the host population. Lack of access to or the avoidance of formal healthcare facilities by undocumented migrants might also expose migrants and host populations to health risks. The avoidance of health checks or treatment by sick undocumented migrants for fear of detection and arrest invariably endangers the broader population.

The final (return) phase is also associated with some health implications. Infirm returnees have the propensity to spread diseases if they are not detected and treated effectively. Migration is not, however, only associated with negative health outcomes. Movement from dilapidated and weak health systems to destinations that have superior healthcare systems will have positive health outcomes for migrants. The return phase is also linked to improved health outcomes for household members who benefit from remittances used to pay for healthcare services. The in-kind remittances in the form of skills transfers and expertise made available to the healthcare systems in origin countries contribute to better healthcare for the broader society.

People who move in response to climate impacts can experience health risks (and potentially opportunities), such as limited access to health care, increased incidence of water- and foodborne diseases, mental health risks, threats to sexual and reproductive health, disrupted social networks, loss of place attachment, skin diseases, and food insecurity, during transit and in sites of settlement (Dayrit et al., 2022; Mazhin et al., 2020).

Our focus group discussions revealed diverse migration-related health outcomes. A participant states her dislike for migration due to the associated challenges, which take a toll on migrants both physically and economically.

I personally don't like migration – whether it is individual migration or family migration – because it presents a lot of difficulties to the person and his family who migrates, both economic difficulties, as well as physical. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

As migrants, especially the vulnerable population (children), move, their mental, psychological, economic and social needs are varied and serious (Şirin & Şirin, 2015). During the transportation phase, participants distinguish between the experiences of regular and irregular migrants. The health risks associated with irregular migration are reported to be much higher than those of regular migrants. In Afghanistan and Ethiopia, participants narrated the risks of drowning, attacks by immigration officials as well as traffickers and sexual assault:

When these people get caught in the borders, the border police of the host countries shoot them. For example, some months ago, some young people were burnt alive on the Iran border by Iranian police. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A)

On one hand, if they migrate legally, it would be good, but illegally it is dangerous and it isn't good and sometimes they drown in the river and lose their lives. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

My classmate's sister was migrating abroad through illegal means. But unfortunately, their boat had drowned in the sea. She and her two children died but her husband and one of her daughters were alive. Her husband said when he saw that his family had died in the sea, he also intended to jump into the sea, but suddenly he noticed that one of his daughters was alive and therefore, he didn't jump to the water because of his daughter. What will happen to her if he dies? He returned with his daughter. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

Going abroad has a lot of difficulties, it is like playing with death, as there is the risk of dying in the ocean, being hunted by wild animals in the jungles. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

As the result she can be infected with sexually communicable diseases. She faces rape. Some migrant women get pregnant without marriage. Then such women want to abort. Such a woman can lose her life. (Moyale, ETH3A)

The post-arrival phase is not without health risks for migrants. Discrimination and racism against migrants expose them to violent attacks and victimisation in destination countries. These attacks could have life-altering implications for migrants, sometimes leading to a strain on limited resources from the origin country to pay the cost of the treatment. These occurrences have both health and financial implications on the migrant at the destination and the migrant household members in the origin country. As migration also imposes stresses on the families that stay behind, the departure of a migrant might affect the emotional well-being of spouses as well as children (for a more detailed discussion on the impacts of migration on families, see the Migration and family life Section). Examples from Afghanistan, Cape Verde and Ghana allude to these experiences:

But there he was chased by muggers [robbers] and they hit him with a knife and took all his money, however, he was underage. It was 9pm when he called me and sent me pictures of his injuries, and when I saw his picture, I was shocked. I asked him what happened. He told me that he could not speak, I should just send him some EUR 500 but if I did not send him the money, he might die due to bleeding. And then that night, I called a money dealer to send my brother the requested amount on his ID. And then he sent EUR 400 to my brother and he treated himself. Eventually, I have spent EUR 2,000 on his treatment. All these are the reasons that we advise and tell others that illegal migration is dangerous. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

They sometimes are not even able to learn a trade and yet they choose to migrate. This has made a lot of mothers to suffer a lot because their husbands run away and leave them behind at times and that has resulted in most of them having high blood pressure issues. (Gbane, GHA1A)

From the discussions among Nigerian participants, there were reports of spiritual attacks on the health of migrants by members of their households at the origin who are judged to be envious of their success and the enhancement in their economic status in society. There is the belief that supernatural powers are evoked to deliberately compromise the health of a

migrant who is deemed to be doing well at the destinations. Another source of concern is the act of organ harvesting, which is said to take place among migrants who are trafficked or those who are trapped in destination countries and ultimately decide to sell some of their organs as a survival strategy.

I will say migration is good and bad for the community at the same time. I have a sister who migrated from Ekpoma to an African country, may her soul rest in peace. She arrived successfully and was doing well because she got a job. The reason most people who travel don't want to come back to their community because like the saying goes, a man's enemy is a member of his household. They believe that developing their community will attract enemies to their success. She was envied because she got there and got settled with a job and accommodation quickly. She was attacked spiritually, and she died. (Awe, NGA2A)

Another thing about young people and the reason why they travel is that some of them go there to sell their body parts like kidney to make money. They get involved in organ harvesting and come back to their communities after selling their organs and start spending the money. (Awe, NGA2A)

During the return phase, some migrants are reported to exhibit signs of both physical and mental health challenges. Migrants who engage in manual labour jobs such as construction, loading of vehicles, working in factories and warehouses and other precarious jobs manifest long-term physical effects as well as mental illness. Accounts from Cape Verde, Afghanistan and Nigeria highlight some of the physical, mental and emotional health complications that migrants return to their origin communities with. Participants explained how the absence of a family member can equally deeply affect the emotional well-being of children and that sometimes it means being separated for an extended period. When we first moved to Pakistan, I was laying mud bricks. I was 13 years old then and I was carrying a box of four bricks, which has created health problems for me and now my lower back is aching. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

For instance, some women who emigrated to Italy, due to so much pressure from their employers, came back with mental disorders. They are mentally sick. (São Nicolau, CPV1A)

Take a look at the health state of migrants; the majority of those who have returned from Arab nations are patients both mentally and physically. They return with a disturbed mental state and low mental abilities. Many people return with physical disability and other health problem, unable to pay their medical bills and pleading for help on the streets. (São Nicolau, CPV1A)

Sometimes they return addicted to drugs and bear semblance to mad people because there was no parental guidance. (Awe, NGA2A)

Moreover, some returning internal migrants also experience adverse health issues based on the nature of work, acquired habits and the lack of safety precautions, for example in the small-scale mining sector in Ghana.

[Participant name], is of the view that, the other reason for the death of the youth is as a result of injection of hard drugs. Hard drugs destroy their systems and they die very early. They take the drugs as a result of the mining. (Gbane, GHA1A)

The other thing is also that, some of their husbands go and the pits collapse on them. Others are also affected by smoke that is emitted from the machines they use to pump out the water. So, all these things are frustrations and difficulties that they are encountering today in Gbane. (Gbane, GHA1A).

Due to the unemployment situation we have in this community, the rate of teenage pregnancies is very high. Because the females do not have any work to do, when they are given some small amount of money [by return migrant workers] they tend to be vulnerable and they allow the guys have their way with them. (Gbane, GHA1A)

In addition, some migrants return with skills that are used to support the health infrastructure and the human resources in the health sector of their origin country, which positively affects the community.

One of my students was in 10th grade but alongside of her studying, she was also a doctor. I got pneumonia and therefore I visited a lot of doctors, but I didn't get well. But then one day she prescribed me some medicine, which relieved my pain and sickness because she studied at a school in Pakistan, as well as practiced medicine in a clinic in Pakistan. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

Although the existing literature supports both positive and negative health outcomes for migrants as well as the communities they interact with throughout all the phases of migration (Wickramageet al., 2018; Siegel, 2020; Siegel, 2021; Olumuyiwa and Adepoju, 2022; IOM, 2017), our research participants mainly focused on the negative effects.

Migration, communities and family life

This final section delves into how migration affects communities and family life. Existing literature shows that migration has a profound impact not only on individual migrants but also on the communities and families they leave behind.

The impact of migration on community development and social cohesion is a complex and evolving field of study. Migration can sometimes undermine traditional community structures and change the overall demographic profile of the community. Pursuing economic opportunities in other places diverts individuals from participating in communal activities. This shift raises questions about the long-term impact on community vitality and support systems (Mutersbaugh 2002).

Family separation is a common consequence of migration, with household members residing in different countries. Several studies have examined the challenges and coping mechanisms of transnational families, highlighting the emotional toll of being apart from loved ones and how families use various means, including technology, to maintain their connections across borders (Baldassar 2007; Parreñas 2005; Silver 2014).

This section draws upon experiences shared by participants across the MIGNEX research areas, offering a nuanced perspective on the positive and negative consequences of individual migration on communities and families. The multifaceted nature of this impact unfolds through distinct themes that

will be explored within each sub-section and indicate what directly affects people locally regarding migration and their communities and families.

Community development and social cohesion

The impact of migration on community development and social cohesion is a subject that resonates throughout the discussions across the MIGNEX research areas. These insights shed light on the potential positive and negative effects of individuals migrating abroad on their communities beyond those general remarks discussed above in the General perceptions of the impacts of migration on development – community level Section. Here, we explore several themes that capture these diverse effects.

Migration significantly affects community demographics and social cohesion. The departure of young people leaves communities feeling empty and lacking youth. The economic consequences were discussed above in the Standard of living and economic consequences of migration section. From a more social perspective, the younger generation's absence affects the community's vibrancy and social structure. In addition, it influences the migration aspirations of other youth, which is not seen as a positive thing by all participants.

It affects the community negatively because all of the young people leave the community and thus the community gets empty and you cannot find a young person in the community. When I see people in the community, I see no young person in the community. All of our young people in the community left abroad. Therefore, my son also told me that he also wants to migrate abroad because what would he do here alone? (Behsud, AFG2B)

It is not good for the area because a community is beautiful by its young people, but when there are no young people, except the elderly, that community will seem pale. (Behsud, AFG2C)

Beyond these general points about communities missing youth, participants in Shahrake Jabrael (AFG1B) discussed how migration among members of an ethnic minority risks the status of that group within the community.

We could gain some rights in Herat city because our population increased, if people migrate and our population decrease again then the people in Herat city wouldn't recognize us as Hazaras and they won't give us our rights and what we deserve and the community will be taken from us and will kick us out of this community. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A)

The influence of migration on the cultural values and traditions of a community is another theme that came out of the focus groups. One idea discussed is that migration can destroy cultural ties and traditions. The narrative of these participants is that young minds might be affected, leading to a disconnect from their cultural roots and ways of life at home and the adoption of "bad behaviour" (see also Erdal et al., 2023). This will also affect community dynamics when and if these individuals return.

Most of the people send their children to foreign countries which greatly ruin their mindsets from cultural ties and tradition common here. As a result, they won't understand ways of living here. (Behsud, AFG2C)

Sometimes when they migrate to other places, they tend to learn certain bad behaviours which they are not known with back home, when they

eventually return back to their community, they might influence other young people with these bad attitudes which they have learned from those places they migrated to. (Down Quarters, NGA1C)

In contrast, a few participants mentioned positive changes in mindsets caused by migration and experiences in countries of destination, which can positively change communities through social remittances or return migration.

Many cultural traits are shared and exchanged. We gain knowledge from them. (Kombolcha, ETH1A)

People get financially stable, and I have observed that return migrants behave politely. Once they are away from home, they learn manners to interact with people. They have learned manners from Western society. (Chot Dheeran, PAK1C)

And migration also leave impacts on an individual as one becomes more aware of social and financial issues and one can learn new things from the host country which ultimately shift to Pakistan as well. (Youhanabad, PAK2D)

Furthermore, participants indicated that migration influences individuals' participation in community projects and associations. Participants in GIN2A provided an example of return migrants who actively participate in community initiatives, such as reforestation and cleanliness projects. They establish associations and contribute positively to their communities, including non-migrant community members, showcasing the potential for individuals to bring new ideas and progress upon their return and fostering social cohesion at the same time.

Yes, we have seen young graduates who have come back and they have created an association for reforestation. They have planted more than 500 trees and they are still going on! (Dialakoro, GIN2A)

However, participants also noted more negative implications of return migration and risks for social cohesion. Migration can bring economic benefits to a family, as discussed. However, in some cases, it leads to selfishness and self-interest, creating tensions between those who have travelled and those who have not. Furthermore, there is a belief among some participants that success abroad may create jealousy within one's community, which may contribute to the reluctance of some migrants to return. These notions add an additional layer of complexity to the social fabric of communities.

Another issue is the fact that when someone travels, it tends to benefit the entire family but in some cases, selfishness and self-interest sets in and that makes you to think that you are of a higher class than the person who has not travelled before. (New Takoradi, GHA3B)

The reason most people who travel don't want to come back to their community because like the saying goes, a man's enemy is a member of his household. They believe that developing their community will attract enemies to their success. (Ekpoma, NGA3C)

Overall, these themes reflect the multifaceted impact of migration on communities and social cohesion. The decisions of individuals to migrate can

influence cultural values, community demographics, civic engagement, and community interactions. This understanding offers valuable insights into the intricate relationship between migration and the communities where people depart and eventually return.

Migration and family life

The impact of migration on families was also discussed in various MIGNEX research areas. The experiences shared by participants shed light on the positive and negative repercussions of individuals migrating abroad, illuminating the complex family dynamics due to this life-altering decision. This section describes these experiences, highlighting distinct themes that encompass the effects of migration on familial bonds and the lives of those who move and those who stay behind.

One theme that emerges from the discussions is the emotional and psychological toll migration can take on family members, mainly when the person who migrates is a vital figure within the family unit.

So, I suffered because of emigration, my dad was also an emigrant... emigrant in Holland... so I... children live without their love. From mom and dad... (Boa Vista, CPV2C)

In some ways, migration has ruined many families. Nine years is a long time period. This really has disturbed the whole family. It's part of life. (Chot Dheeran, PAK1D)

Generally, the town it is not affected by people moving, but it has an impact on individuals maybe if your parents moved or your sister or brother moved maybe the person will experience depression and nostalgic to the missing person. (Baidoa, SOM2A)

It's not a good thing. Because my acquaintance had to go to the foreign country like that, there is no chance to come again. He immigrated alone, his parents are here, his relatives have no chance to see each other here again. (Yenice, TUR2C)

Examples of children never or rarely meeting a parent or sibling due to migration were also discussed in some cases. Separation is known to impact the well-being of children.

One of our relatives migrated to Australia 15 years ago and he has been far away from his family. His daughter is now 15 years old and she has not met her father yet. The man has not been able to receive the citizenship of Australia and he is still waiting. So, it is not good for his family to live without him. (Shahrake Mahdia, AFG3B)

I met my brother... he left he was 16 years old and when I met him, I was at 4th grade, I was 10 years old... I didn't even know I had a brother, I told him I didn't know, he used to tell everyone that I knew... I didn't know, I had no clue... so there is this part of separation. (Boa Vista, CPV2C)

Even more negative, participants discussed migration's strains on family structures and overall well-being. When a core family member migrates, the familial responsibilities and roles shift. Young individuals often have responsibilities, such as caring for their younger siblings and guiding them, and their absence can then lead to tensions and challenges.

Even more extreme and discussed in the context of irregular migration are scenarios where a family member migrates and loses their life. This can adversely impact the well-being of family members, who might feel responsible for letting them go in the first place.

Migration is good and also bad. I know of a family who still regrets allowing their son to migrate because he died. In that situation, migration is bad for the person and even his family. (Ekpoma, NGA3C)

Both positive and negative: when it comes to negative, people purposefully move/pass through dangerous areas such as Libya, or even the Red Sea, which is extremely dangerous, but the person has two options: he/she will tell you I will die or I will go where I went. The family will be agitated and depressed in such a predicament. (Baidoa, SOM2D)

However, it also became apparent in these discussions around migration and families that it matters who migrates. Notably, it became apparent that in the view of some participants, it is better for single people to migrate as this will not affect family structures as much, while someone with a partner and children will leave a bigger hole.

If a single person migrates abroad, it doesn't impact the family much, but when he sends them money, they will feel a little comfortable. But if a married person migrates abroad, his wife and children will suffer. His children will be deprived of their father's love and when a child doesn't feel the love of the father, they grow up with a lot of tensions, which negatively impacts them. (Behsud, AFG2D)

On a more positive note, some participants also noted that it is a trade-off between growing up without a parent and benefitting through remittances, as discussed above.

My parents left I was one year old. So, everything I built in my life, everything I've got, was through emigration. Of course, I lost the opportunity to grow up with them, right, to have that connection with my parents but, the fact that I studied, everything... that's why I believe emigration is important because the remittances they send... (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1D)

Overall, the economic benefits for many participants were more prominent in their narratives than these effects on the well-being of family members. Yet, they should not be neglected, as the impact of migration on families encompasses a mix of emotional, economic, and structural dynamics. While remittances provide economic relief and opportunities, the emotional and psychological toll on family members left behind cannot be overlooked. The strains on family structures further highlight the intricate nature of migration's impact on the lives of those who leave and those who stay back.

Security

There is a bidirectional relationship between migration and security, such that migration results from security or insecurity situations between geographical locations while migration shapes security dynamics across space (Huysmans and Squire, 2009; Walters, 2010). Whereas some extant literature perceives migration as a safety valve that reduces the pressure on origin countries in terms of unemployment and agitation for sources of

livelihood, which have the potential to compromise the national security of states, other literature rather links uncontrolled or poorly managed migration with security risks to both countries of origin and destination (Adamson, 2006; Huysmans, 2000). The upsurge of activities by non-state actors such as Al-Shabab in the East and Horn of Africa as well as West Africa regions, Al Qaeda in the Maghreb and the Middle East regions and Boko Haram in West Africa, for instance, which spread terror among countries have heightened states alertness to the protection of physical state borders to prevent the importation or exportation of terrorists' activities. These fears have precipitated an increase in expenditure on surveillance, border controls, capacity building of immigration officials and the stringent screening of mobile persons. In addition, the deportation or involuntary return of migrants who have criminal backgrounds from destination countries poses security challenges to origin countries. The risk of hardened criminal elements influencing unemployed and susceptible youth to embark on unscrupulous activities forms part of the reservations by the free press in origin countries against clandestine readmission agreements that are arranged, sometimes hastily, between European countries and developing countries that are perceived as major source countries for irregular migrants, especially from Africa.

Migration and security

In the case of Somalia, for instance, participants in our research noted that people's migration is informed by multiple challenges around lack of state security protection, poor quality of education and the relative weakness in their current citizenship to extend privileges to them compared with others. As argued by Altan-Olcay and Balta (2016), Castles (2005), Feere (2010), Ochoa Campo (2017) and Reasoner (2011), the possession of an American passport, for instance, entitles the holder to access most countries' territories and to enjoy unrivalled economic, social and security protection from a developed country and a superpower.

One of the main reasons why people want to leave the country is to get citizenship in a country that is recognized and can go anywhere with it. The other thing is a desire to have one's children to live in a safe country with good quality education and the third reason is instability in the country in terms of security. (Baidoa, SOM2B)

In parts of Somalia where security has improved, there has been an engendering of confidence in migrants abroad to consider return migration to their country of origin. Baidoa is an example of an oasis of peace which has encouraged some returns even though the national picture is generally uncertain. This suggests that return migration is possible in cases where localised security has been restored.

The government is trying to rebuild and gain the trust of the citizens by being reliable and strong which makes people have high hopes about the future of the country. Looking back to a few years, we can see a change in the safety and security of the country and I believe 10 years from now we will be living in a different country which will be very stable if we continue on this path. After all, we would never have come back to Baidoa were we not hopeful that the situation in the country will keep getting better. (Baidoa, SOM2B)

Migration and insecurity

MIGNEX
Background
Paper

Migration and insecurity of destination communities

Participants also discussed security implications for destination communities due to the activities of immigrants, internal migrants as well as returnees. The arrival of immigrant workers who are involved in the artisanal mining for gold, together with the youth of Gbane in Ghana, for instance, is associated with increased criminality within the community. The ability to make “quick money” has also invited criminal elements to attack miners and rob them of their possessions. These activities have led to a broader insecurity atmosphere in the local community. Robberies, rape of women and death through hazardous activities all contribute to a worsening security environment.

According to [Participant name], what is making it more frustrating and not interesting is as a result of the recent developments that we are experiencing and passing through. Today, there is the fear of armed robbery all around. Sometimes our [females] husbands go and when they are coming back on “motor kings” (tricycle bikes), armed robbers attack and beat them, even sometimes the women go to the mines and when they are coming back, they [armed robbers] attack them, take all their monies and possessions. They beat them and sometimes rape them, so it is an issue that we are dealing with. The other thing is also that, some of our husbands go and the pits collapse on them. Others are also affected by smoke that is emitted from the machines they use to pump out the water. So, all these things are frustrations and difficulties that we are encountering today in Gbane. (Gbane, GHA1A)

Lack of economic opportunities, insecurity and migration

At the time of collecting our data, Afghan participants in the focus group discussion lamented the lack of employment opportunities, especially informal sector menial jobs that used to be carried out by workers who got paid daily for their manual labour. They associated this lack of economic opportunities with increased crime rates in their community. In such cases, migration is encouraged and perceived as a means of alleviating the insecurity rates in the society that arise from an acute lack of employment opportunities. The presumption is that such informal jobs would be more available abroad than in a country undergoing several security and political challenges.

The security situation was better in the past. Robbery rate was less but now it has increased which I believe is due to joblessness. In the past, constructions were in progress and the security situation was good and people were hopeful about their life; and when construction rate is high of course they would need more workers but now unfortunately there is not any job opportunity for workers and daily wage workers. It is one of the good things about the past which isn't anymore. I know some people and workers who go to Gozar [a place popular for daily wage work] and wait there till noon for work but then they come back home empty handed and nothing. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

Around one or two months ago, a thief robbed one of our relative's cars in front of his house door. The crimes have increased in the recent two years. It has been 16 years since we started living in Jabrael and before two years ago, we did not experience such bad security situation. Kidnapping is also a common crime nowadays and it has made the situation so tough for us. No,

we don't have personal experience, but we feel so frightened. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

To some extent now police patrol and have several checkpoints which minimize security, but still these thieves look for opportunities to loot someone. In addition, once our security chief along with his personal bodyguards were killed in a blast in Daman. Similarly, house robberies are on the peak, a complete gang of 30 or 40 rubbers go over to a house where they not only loot the house, but also rape women. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B).

Similarly, the absence of security and socio-economic opportunities compels the youth to pursue migration as a necessary alternative, even though they love to stay in their own country, all things being equal. The activities of criminal groups, some of whom are return migrants from neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, underscore the palpable fear among the general population, which triggers further emigration.

It is mostly because of the movements of insurgents (Taliban and ISIS) as they have taken control of most of the districts and people are scared that they might take this district as well. Therefore, the security situation is concerning. The security has worsened both due to the movements of Taliban and ISIS, as well as the criminal activities because a lot of people returned from Pakistan and some people displaced here from other provinces which caused the population to increase and thus it has resulted in an increase in criminal activities such as robberies etc. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A).

Most of the young people from Behsud go to foreign countries. Everyone is going aboard through human trafficking and illegal migration. Although they are beaten and sent back, they still desperately want to go there. It is hard to find a job here, people are poor, security is getting worse day by day, so young people should go to the foreign countries. I request young people to get higher education in foreign countries and return back in order to help develop their communities. Young generation in a community is considered as the backbone of the community even if they play their role negatively. On the other hand, if we have more factories and other work opportunities it would help prevent youth from drugs and migration. So, when the government establishes factories, this would not only barricade youth from migration, but it will always prevent them from joining insurgent groups. Mostly, we hear from youth as they say that we leave Afghanistan because our life is in danger here. As a result, security issues have forced most of them to flee Afghanistan. No one is insane to leave their beloved country and seek migration in other countries when they have security and work opportunities. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

It depends on the country. If we have security in our country, then there will be job opportunities and the economy will be good and we will be in mental peace when we have peace then nowhere else is better than our own country in this case. I don't like migration if our country is secure and there are job opportunities and we are at peace but if you ask me about the current situation, yes, I would say we should migrate and it is good to move. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

I also have the same opinion, we are happy to stay in Afghanistan if we have peace here [another respondent interrupts "nowhere is like our own country"], but for the current situation especially that I am alone and my husband is not here with me I am afraid and I am not happy to live in this

situation. Considering the current situation, migration is good to any country that is a peaceful and secure location. (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1B)

Migration that is triggered by insecurity was also experienced in the case of Gbane in Ghana and Awe in Nigeria.

Nowadays, it is difficult to leave your home and go out after 7pm. This used to be a rumour but now the reality is that, there are armed robbers and armed robbery occurs very frequently on the roads and this is because of the absence of the police. As for the breaking into stores, those are minor issues that we can take care of, for the armed robbery on the road is what is very worrying. (Gbane, GHA1C)

What touched my heart is lack of security because some of the farmers when they go to the farm, they are attacked by Fulanis, armed robbers or kidnappers on the farm. When these incidents are reported to security agencies no action is taken against them. That is my problem in Nigeria now even in Awe, now Awe particularly. (Awe, NGA2C)

Meanwhile, improvement in security arrangements equally minimises irregular migration incidents through channels such as stowaways on ships from ports that are close to known sources of irregular migration. The case of New Takoradi is a typical example whereby the strengthening of security arrangements has led to a minimisation in the number of successful attempts at migrating through the Takoradi harbour in Ghana. The youth laments the closing down of that potential route to irregular migration, but a growing number of youth are realising the risks associated with this form of migration and are taking steps to discourage such incidents.

Secondly, in the area of migration, the security system has helped to reduce the attempts of people to stowaway. In addition, the bad name left us by our past generation has been changed by us now. I am able to stand and defend the community and prove to people that the place is now a safe place. Even if I see someone trying to molest a foreigner in the community, I will personally defend the foreigner except the fact that you came with a bad agenda. (New Takoradi, GHA3B)

However, some people prefer to stay in their familiar environment despite the security challenges. The feeling of a stranger in a new place is sufficient to dissuade some people from contemplating migration as a solution to their insecurity and joblessness.

I don't like migration at all to any country or any other place. Even though the current situation in Afghanistan is insecure, I still don't like to migrate to any other place or country. I feel like a stranger in other areas. In the previous civil war in Afghanistan, I was there and I did not migrate to anywhere else (Shahrake Jabrael, AFG1A).

Discussion

The existing literature is replete with studies that have sought to draw an associational, if not causal, link between migration and development. However, most analyses focus narrowly on the economic and social aspects of development. Our approach expands on the scope of the concept of development by adopting a multi-dimensional definition encompassing standard of living, education, health, participation in society, and security

from violence (Carling, 2019). The rationale for this approach is not to challenge the veracity or reliability of existing research but to use narratives, perceptions, and voices of focus group participants as a vehicle through which our central research question: “How do people talk about the development implications of migration?” could be answered. This adds a nuanced perspective to the broader discourses on migration-related development impacts.

Narratives from our focus group participants across 26 research areas in ten countries reveal both individual and community-level development impacts of migration. At the individual level, migrants gain valuable life experiences both personally and professionally. The utilisation of human capital characteristics of migrants to access employment opportunities abroad improves their own well-being and the acquisition of new skills. This finding feeds into existing discourses about skills transfers by migrants as well as the sending of remittances to recipients in origin communities, in line with the tenets of the Neoclassical and the New Economics of Labour Migration theories. The focus group discussions highlight household migration decision-making, which seeks to not only maximise income and utilise the human capital of migrants but also the diversification of sources of earnings, risk aversion and insurance against capital constraints in origin communities. Migration is thus associated with higher standards of living, improved access to education and skills development, worsening health outcomes for migrants especially during the movement and return phases of the migration cycle, greater participation in the broader society at home and an escape from insecurity at home. These positive outcomes are, however, mediated by some variables, such as whether the migrant is educated or not, skilled or unskilled, how they migrate (regularly or irregularly), and choice of destination. Individual-level adverse impacts on migrants include the risk of being trafficked, a wide range of abuses, mental and physical health complications throughout the four phases of migration (pre-departure, transportation, post-arrival, and return) and possible death.

Community-level impacts of migration on development are equally diverse and nuanced. The lowering of unemployment numbers and pressures of social service provisioning are examples of such positive impacts. Positive community-level impacts such as improvements in community living standards, establishment of businesses, and the utilisation and/or transfer of acquired skills must, however, be counterbalanced with negative impacts around community demographics and social cohesion, brain drain, deskilling and undermining cultural values.

As such, we conclude that analysis of narratives about the development impacts of migration underscores the inherent complexities associated with multiple factors that find meaning at both individual and community levels. In addition, there is a need for the disaggregation of analysis beyond composite concepts or terms such as migration and development or migration and health to allow for a nuanced appreciation of variable impacts embedded in such composite terms. This means analysing the impacts of migration on the standard of living, education, health, participation in society, and security from violence rather than lumping development together as a unitary term or concept. Much as the bulk of migration literature focuses on remittances as the most tangible resource in boosting

development in origin countries, invariably, the impact of remittances does vary depending on the volume of remittances received, the size and nature of the local economy, the existence of basic infrastructure, and government policies. This necessitates the acknowledgement of inherent challenges and heterogeneity of impacts across space and time. Finally, much as the extant literature is explicit about the fact that migration results from security or insecurity situations between geographical locations, we find that migration equally shapes security dynamics across space at origin communities.

Conclusion

Summary of main findings

In this comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted impact of migration, we set out to investigate how migration influences diverse dimensions of development, from the individual to the household and even the broader community. Our aim was to unravel the complex narratives of focus group participants in 26 research areas across ten countries. Their narratives surrounding the positive and negative effects of migration shed light on the implications for different research areas and offer valuable insights for policy considerations. Throughout our analysis, we have uncovered the varying perspectives from male and female participants across Africa, Asia and the Middle East, emphasising the intricate interplay between migration and development through the words of those more or less directly affected by the migration of household and community members.

The general narratives encompass a diverse and intricate viewpoint on how migration influences various aspects of life. When considering the individual level, migration is often perceived as an avenue for personal growth and development. It offers opportunities for better education, improved access to healthcare, and enhanced living conditions, which can significantly benefit those who migrate. However, these benefits are often accompanied by concerns about the separation of family members. When individuals migrate, it can lead to emotional and logistical challenges related to family cohesion and unity. Moreover, there is a recognition that migration may bring about shifts in cultural values and traditions, which can have positive and negative consequences.

On the community level, the narratives around the impacts of migration are deeply intertwined with community development and social cohesion. The departure of young individuals to other places has notable consequences. It can result in a loss of vibrancy and social structure within the community, which is often associated with the absence of the younger generation. The economic implications of migration can also influence this aspect. Furthermore, migration can potentially reshape cultural values and traditions within the community. While this can bring about positive changes, there is also the risk of disconnecting from cultural roots and adopting behaviours that differ from traditional norms. This, in turn, may impact community dynamics, especially if and when these individuals return. In essence, migration's effects on communities are multifaceted,

influencing not only the demographic makeup but also cultural aspects and social connections within the community.

Considering multi-dimensional development processes at the local level, we then set out to analyse how the focus group participants discussed different dimensions of development. Again, both negative and positive narratives were found.

Family separation, for example, was a recurring theme, impacting not only individual and family well-being but also community dynamics. When household members reside in different countries, economic benefits can be outweighed by the emotional toll on those left behind, causing distress and vulnerabilities, particularly among children and the elderly, while also affecting dimensions such as health and education.

Moreover, the phenomenon of brain drain is a concern among many focus group participants. Both skilled and unskilled individuals migrating to seek better opportunities can result in a loss of human capital, hindering local development in various fields, including education and healthcare.

Cultural shifts and a potential disconnect from cultural roots are negative narratives highlighted by some of the participants. Migration introduces new ideas and behaviours that challenge traditional ways of life. This can be especially relevant when young minds, influenced by experiences abroad, struggle to align with their home communities' traditional values and practices. This is in spite of the fact that there were also some positive narratives about the introduction of new ideas and experiences, which can shape traditional norms. The relationship between migration and cultural identity is therefore complex, with potential risks of losing cultural heritage or transforming traditional ways of life.

Security concerns serve as a significant driver for migration, particularly in regions marked by instability, conflict, and threats to personal safety. Equally, the return of migrants from destinations with security challenges as well as those with habits of drug abuse and criminality compromise the security dynamics of origin communities. Criminal activities, such as armed robbery and theft, significantly affect security conditions, posing immediate threats to individuals and communities and contributing to an atmosphere of insecurity.

On the positive side, the focus group participants underline that migration offers several interconnected benefits that span multiple dimensions of development. These benefits are associated with regular migration, migration for the purposes of employment or education and migration to places where the migrant has strong social networks. Economic growth is promoted through remittances, investment capital, and innovation. Remittances contribute to improved living standards, access to better education, and enhanced healthcare in both host and home communities. This economic infusion fosters community development, creates job opportunities, and improves living conditions.

Similarly, migration opens doors to better educational opportunities, including access to quality schools, higher education, and vocational training. As migrants acquire new skills and knowledge abroad, they may

contribute to human capital development in their home communities upon their return, mitigating some negative consequences of brain drain.

Moreover, the exchange of cultural traits and experiences through migration enriches communities with diversity and multiculturalism. While cultural shifts may pose challenges, there is also the potential for positive cultural exchanges and innovation, which can enhance social cohesion and community vibrancy.

Overall, it is also important to note that the way the participants discussed the issue of migration and its impacts on development was generally dependent on context and, in many cases, nuanced. Weighing positive and negative impacts was common within the same focus group discussion and sometimes even by the same participants. On several topics, they discussed different kinds of migration, regular versus irregular, and different destinations (for example, neighbouring countries versus Europe), and how such factors shape the impacts that migration has on development. This highlights the complexity of lived experiences of migration and its impacts on development.

Uncovered complexities of migration and multi-dimensional development

As we analysed the multiple dimensions of narratives around migration's impact on individuals, communities, and local development, we observed a significant degree of interlinkage and thematic overlap. These dimensions of development used are not isolated entities but instead intricately interconnected, shaping and influencing one another. For instance, economic consequences intersect with educational opportunities, as individuals often migrate in pursuit of improved livelihoods and education for themselves and their families. This intersection highlights the interconnected nature of individual well-being and community development. Similarly, health challenges can resonate with economic outcomes when health issues impact one's ability to work and earn a living, thereby affecting not only the individual but also the community's economic vitality.

At the community level, social cohesion and cultural shifts intersect with economic stability, as the departure of young community members for migration can not only disrupt social structures but also impact the labour force and community dynamics. This overlap emphasises the complexity of migration's impacts, underscoring the need for holistic and integrated approaches in policy and research to comprehensively address the multifaceted impact of migration on local development. Moreover, at the community level, our analysis demonstrates a link between (in)security and other variables such as the propensity to migrate, the likelihood of return, and access to health and education opportunities.

Implications for policy and research

The narratives of the MIGNEX focus group participants our analysis uncovered also have implications for policymakers and researchers. Policies and interventions should recognise and address the emotional and

psychological toll of family separation due to migration. Comprehensive support systems, including counselling and community-based programmes, can help individuals, families, and communities navigate the challenges and stresses associated with migration. This approach ensures the mental well-being of those who migrate and those staying back.

From the narratives, education has multi-directional and multi-level linkages with the volume, pattern and nature of migration. There is, therefore, the need for a comprehensive policy framework that focuses on education as an enabler of regular migration, access to well-paid employment opportunities abroad, and skills and remittance transfers.

Countries of origin should actively engage with their diaspora communities. The creation of an enabling environment with well-functioning institutions and systems would support the absorption of diaspora contributions while encouraging greater investments. Participants highlighted several areas where migrants contribute, but also some where they show no interest or face challenges. Policymakers in countries of origin should strengthen strategies and policies that actively engage with the diaspora. Encouraging migrants to contribute to their home communities through investments, knowledge transfer, and social initiatives can positively impact them. Moreover, creating platforms for dialogue between the diaspora and local communities can facilitate collaborative efforts for sustainable development. This two-way engagement can foster economic growth, knowledge exchange, and improved community development.

To safeguard the health of migrants and their communities, policymakers must ensure that migrants, regardless of their legal status, have access to healthcare services. This not only protects the well-being of those who migrate but also prevents the potential spread of diseases within the home communities and stresses those staying back and worrying about migrants.

In terms of research, further studies are needed to understand the long-term effects of migration on local labour markets, community dynamics, and overall development. Looking at developments in the same community and how they link to migration over time will deliver more robust results than this cross-sectional analysis of data collected at one point.

The added value of our study is the diversity of contexts included. This highlights that comparative studies spanning various research areas can provide better insights into the complex development implications of migration. Future studies should consider this and try to understand the specific contexts they are focusing on to further contribute to our understanding of what shapes how migration and development are linked.

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