MIGNEX

New insights on the development impacts of migration

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MIGNEX

MIGNEX (Aligning Migration Management and the Migration-Development Nexus) is a five-year research project (2018–2023) with the core ambition of creating new knowledge on migration, development and policy. It is carried out by a consortium of nine partners in Europe, Africa and Asia: the Peace Research Institute Oslo (coordinator), Danube University Krems, University of Ghana, Koç University, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Maastricht University, ODI, the University of Oxford and Samuel Hall.

See www.mignex.org.

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MIGNEX Reports

MIGNEX Reports are flagship publications written at the end of the project period to synthesise insights from across the more specific and technical analyses.

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Contents

Migration doesn't just impact the people who leave, it shapes families and communities back home. Using data from 26 communities across Africa, Asia and the Middle East, we unpack a complex picture of the multifaceted impacts of migration on households and communities staying back. Understanding the circumstances under which migration has positive or negative effects helps us identify policy priorities to leverage the positive effects for development.

1 The impacts of migration are multifaceted

Migration affects family members staying back through different channels: the absence of a family member, the receipt of remittances and/or as a source of new ideas and behaviours. In turn, this means that the impacts of migration are multifaceted and can even be contradictory.

2 Remittances mostly have positive effects, but not exclusively so

While receiving remittances is vital for many households, they do not solve all livelihood challenges. While receiving remittances is important in explaining higher wealth, they tend to not be enough to decrease poverty in a community.

3 Migration affects origin communities in diverse ways

Migration exerts diverse effects at the community level, which are less well understood than the effects on migrants themselves and their families. The impacts can be positive and negative and can result in changes in demographic, economic and social community dynamics.

4 The effects of migration are shaped by local context

Understanding the effects of migration across communities reveals nuanced landscapes. Divergent outcomes underscore the complex interplay of migration variables and local conditions where transnational ties are a key facilitating factor between migration and positive well-being outcomes.

5 Migration can change norms and values

Migration can have numerous indirect effects on communities of origin through the sharing of ideas, behaviours and social capital. Norms and values can be transformed within an area, which in turn can affect development outcomes, both positively and negatively.

6 Return migration can foster development, under certain circumstances

Return migration can have positive effects on development, with migrants bringing back resources, skills or ideas. But the destination country and the form and scale of return mediate these effects, as do conditions in the communities migrants are returning to.

Introduction

> My parents left when 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 of the remittances they send[1]

The life story of a man in Shahrake Jabrael (Afghanistan) highlights the diverse ways – good and bad – in which migration can affect family members staying back.[2] While migration has been touted as one of the most effective poverty reduction strategies for countries of origin,[3] the reality is that its effects vary. They depend on the specific local and country context as well as what level (individual, household, community, country) we are considering. Additionally, migration can have competing effects at the same time. As seen in the example above, while migration helped to educate and ensure a decent living standard on one hand, on the other it also meant separation and loss of time with loved ones.

Within the academic literature and policy discussions, there are large and growing insights on how migration can affect development of an individual or household, a community or a country more generally.[4] Most existing research has either been based on aggregated national, regional or global data, or it comprises hyper-focused analyses of particular groups or locations.

This is where MIGNEX, grounded in data from 26 research areas over 10 diverse countries across Africa, Asia and the Middle East, can give real insights. Our data and approach connect the specificities of local dynamics with the broader patterns of variation across locations.

1 Focus group AFG1D.
2 Inspired by the paper by Crawley et al. (2023), we purposely avoid stigmatising language such as 'households left behind' and instead use the term 'staying back'. This term better encapsulates the realities of household-wide migration decision-making processes in most contexts, where it is a strategic decision for some members to leave and for others to stay back.
3 Clemens (2011).
4 See Andersson and Siegel (2020) for a review.

Woman doing embroidery in Sharake Jabrael (Afghanistan). Najia Alizada for MIGNEX.

Moreover, instead of a broad focus on development, we look specifically at the multidimensional well-being of individuals and households in communities of origin.[5] This conceptualisation is inspired by the trailblazing work on multidimensional poverty and human development, such as the Human Development Index (HDI). In our investigation of the effects of migration on development we look at different outcomes at the individual, household and community level. These range from economic factors, like levels of wealth, to health, education, community participation, security and more.

Migration itself is multifaceted and there are various ways it can impart impacts, including through the absence of a person, the receipt of monetary or in-kind remittances, as well as through the transfer of new knowledge, norms, values and ways of doing things (social remittances), and through return migration and migrant investments. Our wide-ranging research shows how all of these different facets of migration can potentially affect those who stay back, but often in differing and even contradictory ways.

5 This reflects the MIGNEX research design, which focuses on the individual and household level.

The European Commission's wish for a better understanding of the links between migration, development and policy mobilised the research funding that, in turn, enabled the MIGNEX project. In carrying out the research we have responded to this wish with the intention to show the reality of the development impacts of migration, beyond superficial positive and negative narratives.

The next section of this report summarises the research design, and thereafter follows a more technical methodology section. Six chapters form the heart of the report. Each focuses on a specific and substantive insight on the impacts of migration, distilled from the extensive quantitative and qualitative research. This is where we invite our readers to learn more about how migration can affect different development outcomes at the individual, household and community level. The six core chapters are followed by policy implications, a selection of concluding remarks and a presentation of MIGNEX publications and data.

This is one of three concluding reports

Research design

The foundations for our insights

MIGNEX aims to produce new knowledge on migration, development and policy (Box 1). The research has been designed according to strategic choices that laid a path towards this objective.

The non-technical elements of the research design that follow provide important background for the core chapters of this report. The design for the MIGNEX project as a whole contains additional elements that have enabled analysis of the causes of migration and the various roles of policy.

Box 1. The MIGNEX project

MIGNEX – Aligning Migration Management and the Migration–Development Nexus – is a collaborative research project funded by the European Commission and carried out independently by a consortium of research institutions. The three core lines of research examine (1) how development affects migration, (2) how migration affects development in countries of origin – which is the topic of this report, and (3) how migration-related policy shapes these two-way effects.

The project was originally planned to be carried out between 2018 and 2023, but this was extended to 2024 as a consequence of delays and disruptions stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic. The MIGNEX consortium comprises:

Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway (coordinator)
Danube University Krems, Austria
University of Ghana, Ghana
Koç University, Turkey
Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan
Maastricht University, The Netherlands
ODI (formerly Overseas Development Institute), United Kingdom
University of Oxford, United Kingdom

The core partners were supported by various subcontractors, of which Samuel Hall played the largest role. Throughout the project, the team has engaged with a broad End-User Panel and a small End-User Board.

Local communities

The causation of migration plays out in local communities, often in different ways within the same country. Therefore, most MIGNEX research is structured around 26 local communities, which we refer to as *research areas*. This is a unique aspect of the project.

The research areas are scattered across 10 countries (see Figure 1), which were selected because they are key origin and/or transit countries for migration to Europe. While there are 26 research areas in total, many of our analyses are restricted to 25 areas because survey data collection had to be halted for security reasons in one area (Kombolcha, Ethiopia).

Figure 1. MIGNEX research areas

Source: The authors.

Afghanistan

Shahrake Jabrael

Shahrake Jabrael is a peri-urban area near Herat, where most residents are internally displaced people or return migrants. Unemployment is high and state and international support is limited.

Behsud

Behsud is a peri-urban area near Nangahar city. An influx of internally displaced people and return migrants has led to urban growth, livelihoods and educational expansion.

Shahrake Mahdia

Shahrake Mahdia is an unplanned neighbourhood in Kabul. Built after the arrival of internally displaced people and funded by the diaspora, migration has been integral to its development.

Cabo Verde

São Nicolau

São Nicolau is an island that is poorly connected to the rest of the country. After decades of migration, transnational ties are weakening.

Boa Vista

Boa Vista is an island that relied on international remittances for decades. International tourism has brought new opportunities and spurred in-migration.

Ethiopia

Kombolcha

Kombolcha is a long-standing manufacturing town that has seen significant external investment. International migration is fairly common, especially among women.

Batu

Batu is a small city where foreign-owned agribusinesses have led to increased employment and rural–urban in-migration.

Moyale

Moyale is a town bordering Kenya where cross-border mobility is common. A new 'one-stop' border post for trade has increased in- and transit migration to Moyale.

Ghana

Gbane

Gbane is a rural farming and mining community. A lack of job opportunities and severe land degradation are severely impacting livelihoods. Internal out- and in-migration are common.

Golf City

Golf City is an urban centre in Greater Accra. It has seen significant investment in industrial, infrastructural and utilities projects, resulting in high levels of internal in-migration.

New Takoradi

New Takoradi is a small town built for those displaced by the expansion of an industrial port. Livelihood opportunities are scarce and international out-migration is high.

Guinea

Boffa

Boffa is a costal town where traditional livelihoods are increasingly impacted by the international mining and fishing industry. It has a long history of international migration, but internal migration is now more common.

Dialakoro

Dialakoro is a rural district at the border with Mali where cross-border mobility is common. Mining is a factor for both in-migration and out-migration to nearby countries.

Nigeria

Down Quarters

Down Quarters is an informal neighbourhood in Kaduna city, located close to the railway and a new dry port. The area has a long history of in-migration, while internal out-migration is common too.

Awe

Awe is a rural town and a long-standing migration destination for agricultural workers. Such livelihoods and mobility are increasingly impacted by conflict and environmental shocks.

Ekpoma

Ekpoma is a town known for its university and educational institutions. Given high international migration outflows in the State, migration interventions and campaigns are common.

Pakistan

Chot Dheeran

Chot Dheeran is a village where agriculture and brickmaking are the predominant livelihoods. Transnational ties are strong after decades of migration and these ties shape local development.

Youhanabad

Youhanabad is a neighbourhood in Lahore undergoing major educational expansion. Having the largest Christian-majority in the country, it has seen decades of internal in-migration of Christians.

Keti Bandar

Keti Bandar is an old port town where the impacts of climate change and debt in a global, fishery-based economy are pervasive. Despite this, all forms of migration are uncommon.

Somalia

Erigavo

Erigavo is a town in Somalia that has seen sustained improvement in security and infrastructure. After decades of high out-migration during the civil war, migration aspirations are now low.

Baidoa

Baidoa is city that is the focus of many development, humanitarian and stabilisation initiatives. It hosts large numbers of internally displaced people.

Tunisia

Enfidha

Enfidha is a town that has seen rapid development, including the construction of a park zone and airport. Yet local people don't feel they have benefited from this and they have high migration aspirations.

Redeyef

Redeyef is a marginalised mining town with high levels of unemployment. It has a long history of migration to Europe and out-migration remains high.

Turkey

Hopa

Hopa is a town close to the Georgian border. It has benefited from cross-border economic activity and mobility, as well as from the construction of highways and dams.

Yenice

Yenice is a rural town and district that has seen some major infrastructure developments, but most people still work in agriculture. Migration is mostly internal.

Kilis

Kilis is a town near the Syrian border, hosting many refugees. The increased population and the closing of the Turkey–Syria border brought about major spatial, cultural and demographic transformation for Kilis.

Selection of research areas

The project funding required a focus on countries of origin and transit for migration to Europe. Within this scope, we identified 10 countries that allow an examination of a range of migration drivers and impacts in different combinations. This involved working in insecure settings while ensuring feasibility and safety for the team..

Each research area is a reasonably well-defined local society such as an island, a town, a rural community or a distinct neighbourhood of a city, generally with a population of 10,000–100,000 people. They are not necessarily administrative units.

The areas were systematically selected to ensure *theoretically relevant diversity* of development and migration experiences in terms of labour markets, livelihoods, security, social protection, infrastructure and more. For instance, some areas are in stagnation while others are flourishing, even within the same country.

Our analyses mostly seek to draw general conclusions based on the variation across research areas. The local migration dynamics are presented in greater depth in 26 MIGNEX Case Study Briefs.[6]

Potential migrants

MIGNEX focuses on areas of origin and transit for international migration to Europe or elsewhere. This means that we see all individuals who live there as potential migrants, i.e., people who may or may not (want to) migrate. Some are also internal or international migrants, who have migrated to the research area at some point in the past. In these cases, it is their potential onward migration that is of interest to the project.

In the research design, migration features in two ways as an object of explanation. The first is the potential future migration of research participants, which we mainly analyse in terms of migration aspirations and preparations.

6 See mignex.org/publications for all MIGNEX Case Study Briefs.

The second is the past migration of other people from the community. This information is used to identify areas with high migration intensity and to examine possible causes.

The project responds to a demand for knowledge about international migration. Consequently, we often use ‘migration’ as a shorthand for migration to another country.

Several types of data

In each research area we collected data in four ways: (1) a sample survey of 500 individuals, (2) focus group discussions, (3) key informant interviews, and (4) observations by researchers in the field. Details about the data collection and analyses are presented in the Methodology section.

Young adults

The people who responded to the survey or participated in focus group discussions are young adults between the ages of 18 and 39 years. This choice removed the challenges of interviewing minors and allowed us to use our resources on the life stages in which the issue of migrating or not is most prominent. Our shorthand references to ‘people’ in the research area generally reflect data from people in this age range.

Research collaboration

The research design relates closely to the creation of a consortium of partners and collaborators in 14 countries – the 10 where the research is focused, plus four European countries. Most data collection and analyses were conducted by participants from two or more institutions.

Methodology

Techniques for data collection and analysis

Whereas the research design provides a strategic birds-eye perspective, methodology concerns the more detailed technical aspects of how the research was carried out. This is not required to understand the content of subsequent chapters but can serve as a reference, particularly for readers with an interest in methodology.

Table 1 summarises the data used in the analyses that underlie this report. As with the research design, the methodology does not cover the entirety of the MIGNEX project.

Table 1. Overview of data

Form of data collection	Target population/ features	Sampling/ recruitment	Number of research areas	Extent of data per research area	Type of data produced
Quantitative					
Survey	Resident young adults (aged 18–39)	Random	25	519 respondents on average[1]	Survey data file (N=12,973)
Qualitative					
Focus group discussions	Resident young adults (aged 18–39)	Purposive, with four segments	26	4 audio recorded discussions with 6 participants on average	Complete transcripts (695,000 words)
Key informant interviews	Residents	Purposive, maximising diversity and insight	26	20 interviews on average, with written summaries of varying length	26 Research Area Interim Reports with coding scales
Researcher observation	Features of the physical and social environment	–	26	Notes on 27 topics, of which 19 were coded numerically[2]	

Notes: (1): Not including Kombolcha (Ethiopia), where survey data collection was halted for security reasons.
(2) The topics were assessed on the basis of observation and key informant interviews.

Survey data collection

The MIGNEX survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews with young adults and was carried out in 23 languages.[7] It was pilot-tested in three countries in early 2020, and then carried out in full over 15 months from late 2020 onwards, as Covid-19 restrictions eased.

In each research area we aimed to reach a target sample of 500 respondents aged 18–39 years. The sampling strategy was designed to be workable in all research areas, across extremely diverse conditions. In most areas, geographically specific population data was not available to create a sampling frame. We therefore developed a procedure to calculate population estimates from satellite images. Within each area, clusters were sampled on the basis of probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) with stratification. In each cluster, 20 households were sampled by means of a systematic random walk procedure. When enumerators visited a household and it had one or more members in the 18–39 age range, a target respondent was selected through a randomised procedure. If the individual was not available at that time, an appointment was scheduled or the household was revisited up to three times.

The consent rate among selected individuals was 98.5%, in stark contrast to the low levels that are common in surveys conducted by phone, online or intercept modes. The interviews were conducted on tablets using SurveyCTO software and had an average duration of 33 minutes. The survey instrument (questionnaire) was developed over a one-year period, with particular attention to combining accuracy with a conversational format that could reduce respondent fatigue.[8] Continuous data monitoring and extensive quality control measures during fieldwork, such as randomly selected reinterviews, helped ensure data quality.

The numbers that explain migration
MIGNEX Video
mignex.org/numbers

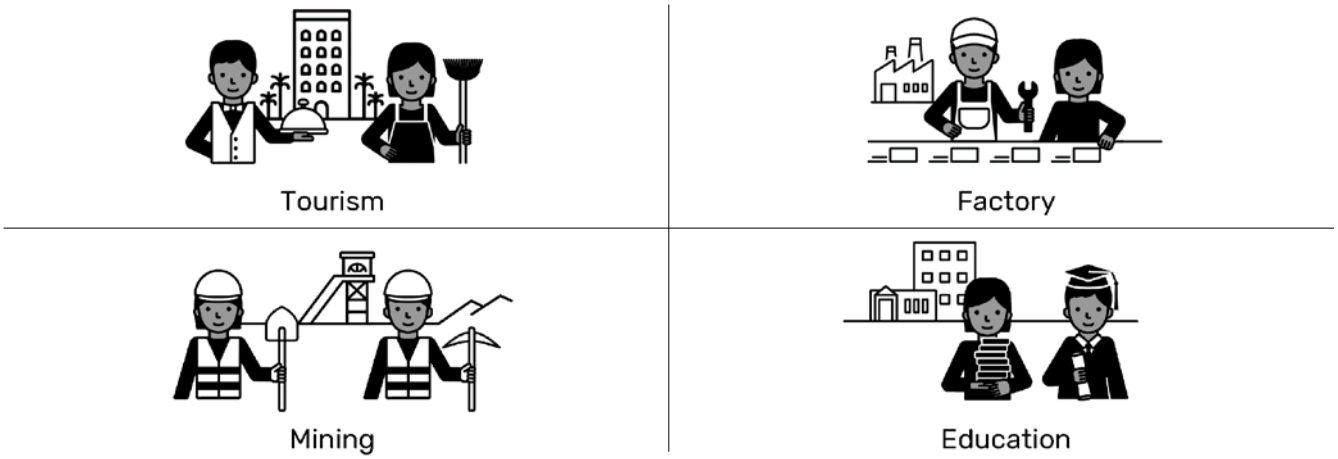
7 See Hagen-Zanker et al. (2020) for guidelines and procedures for survey data collection, and Hagen-Zanker et al. (2023) for documentation of the process and the data.
8 See Hagen-Zanker et al. (2020) for the survey instrument.

Qualitative data collection

Fieldwork in each research area generated qualitative data. Data collection was carried out by one or two MIGNEX researchers in collaboration with research assistants, interpreters and local facilitators.[9] Fieldwork in four research areas was conducted in 2020 and served to fine-tune procedures, strategies and advice. Data collection in the remaining 22 research areas took place between February and November 2021.

The team carried out four focus group discussions in each research area, with groups separated by gender and the extent of experience or connection with migration (either strong or weak migration ties). The groups offered opportunities for exchange and reflection at a collective level, bringing out agreement, disagreement and complementary perceptions of reality. The discussions were moderated according to a guide that solicited reflections on the community and how it had changed over time, as well as a discussion about the existence or feasibility of various livelihood opportunities for school-leavers. To facilitate connections across research areas while leaving room for local interpretation, this discussion was guided by visual cards that illustrated an array of opportunities, including migration (Figure 2). The focus group discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed in full.

Figure 2. Example cards used to facilitate focus group discussions



Source: MIGNEX fieldwork material (design by Jørgen Carling).

9 See Erdal and Carling (2020) for guidelines and procedures for the qualitative data collection, and Erdal et al. (2023) for documentation of the process and the data. Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, fieldwork in Guinea and Nigeria was carried out by locally based researchers who were brought into the team, accompanied remotely by core team members.

Researchers in the field also interviewed **key informants** – a category that we broadly define as anyone with insights, perspectives and experiences that can broaden our understanding of the local community. With a clear goal of ensuring diversity, the interviews included, for instance, local officials, civil society activists, shop keepers, itinerant vendors and other residents. The fieldwork teams then used these interviews, combined with impressions from the focus group discussions and observations during their time in the field, to report on 27 topics of interest to the MIGNEX project. Coding scales were used to generate systematic comparative data on 19 of these topics.[10]

Box 2. Transparency for quality and sharing

All methodological procedures are compiled in the *MIGNEX Handbook*, which was written chapter by chapter as the project progressed. For instance, the instructions and guidance for survey data collection are contained in Chapter 7 that serves the needs of country leads, supervisors, enumerators and data managers, and that also serves as a record to accompany the data. A later chapter, Chapter 10, documents how the data collection unfolded and how the data was processed and organised in advance of analyses.

All the MIGNEX Handbook Chapters are published online as a separate publication series. Formalising the preparation of planning documents in this way required additional effort but ensured better management of the project life cycle. Moreover, publishing the fine details of methodology and project management is valuable from the perspective of open science. The broader returns to our investment in methodology are evident in the volume of downloads of several methodology chapters.

See mignex.org/publications for all MIGNEX Handbook Chapters.

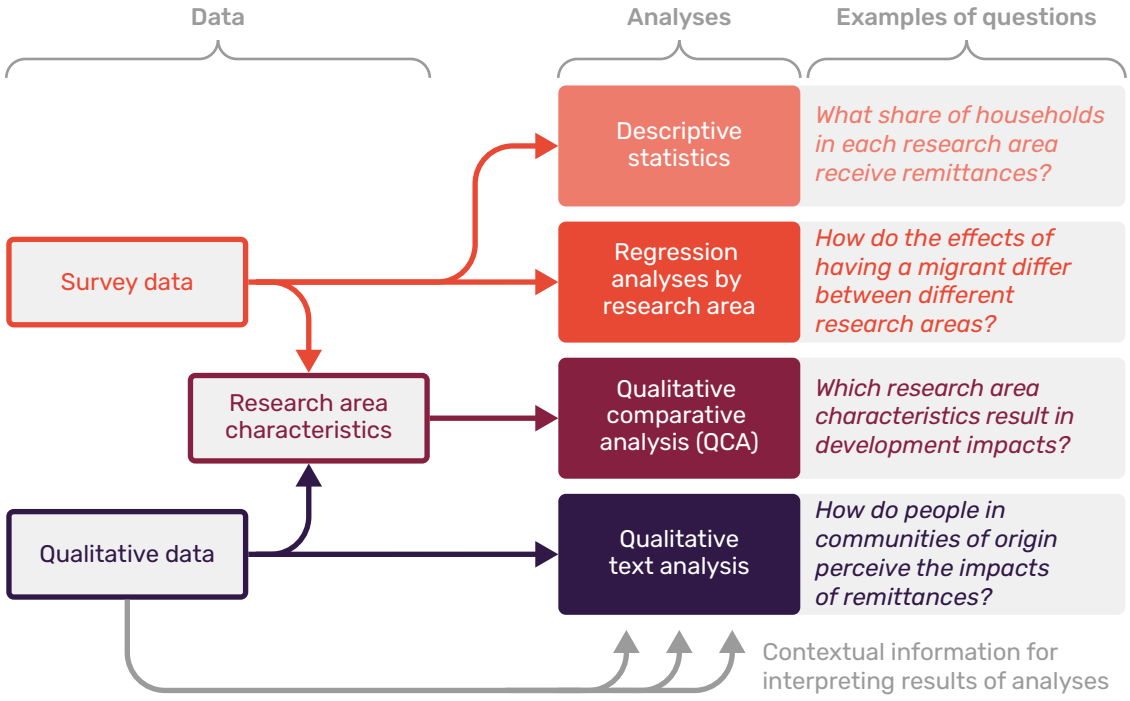
10 Fieldworkers reported on the following topics, of which some were also assessed with a coding scale (marked *): Development interventions; Characteristics of public social protection; Characteristics of infrastructure development*; Mobile phone network*; Prominence of international tourism*; Prominence of micro-level international aid*; Prominence of international investment*; Educational expansion*; Gender relations*; Culture and traditions; Religious context; Level of insecurity and violence*; Visibility of police/military/security*; Environmental degradation*; Vulnerability to natural disasters*; Change over time; Overall atmosphere (hope/despair)*; Characteristics of out-migration; Characteristics of in-migration; Characteristics of return migration; Salience of international out-migration*; Attitudes towards international out-migration*; Perceived feasibility of international migration*; Presence of migration information campaigns*; Gender aspects of migration*; Strength of transnational ties*; Importance of collective remittances*.

Analyses

The various forms of data were used alone or in combination to enable diverse analysis (see Figure 3).[11]

The most basic use of the survey data was to generate descriptive statistics. These yield valuable insights in their own right, as illustrated in later parts of this report. In the more advanced analysis of survey data, we examined patterns among the 13,000 respondents across research areas by means of regression models. We used different methods including some drawing on quasi-experimental approaches,[12] such as Instrumental Variable approaches, that take us closer to understanding causality beyond mere associations. We also ran regressions in parallel for each research area to see where the overall effects played out locally, or not. When results from survey analyses are presented in the text, they are always weighted to reflect the survey design and sampling process. Analyses were carried out in Stata.

Figure 3. Overview of analyses



Source: The authors.

11 Additional details on analyses are included in the relevant publications, primarily in the MIGNEX Background Paper series.
12 See Memon et al. (2023).

Survey data should always be interpreted in light of the exact questions asked of respondents. When we use data from specific questions, notes indicate the survey item IDs, such as 'C10', so that formulations can be identified in the survey instrument.[13]

In addition to the regression analyses, we used qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to understand the variation of drivers and outcomes across the 26 research areas. This method for cross-case comparison can help explain why a certain outcome occurs in some cases but not in others. It does so by exploring whether multiple factors ('conditions') and their combinations are necessary and/or sufficient to produce a particular outcome. Importantly, QCA helps identify which combinations of conditions can yield the same outcome, such as high levels of economic well-being. The QCA was of the fuzzy-set type and carried out with R in combination with custom packages for QCA and set methods.[14]

The survey data was collected on tablets to maximise data quality and efficiency. Jørgen Carling for MIGNEX.

13 See Hagen-Zanker et al. (2023).
14 For details see Czaika and Godin (2022); Czaika and Weisner (2023).

The analyses were based on matrices that gave a score for each research area on a large number of conditions. The foundations for these scores came partly from the survey data and partly from the coding scales that researchers completed for qualitative fieldwork.

While QCA is referred to as 'qualitative', it is a formal method founded on mathematical logic. By contrast, MIGNEX analyses of focus group data used a conventional approach to examining textual data through descriptive and interpretative coding. The transcripts from the discussions amount to almost 700,000 words and were coded in NVivo. A team of researchers developed a codebook by means of an abductive approach, staying close to the data while being attentive to the project's objectives and research questions. The codebook contains 60 codes at different levels of abstraction, such as 'ideas about migration', 'disagreement' and 'hopeful', which were applied alone or in combination.[15] Compilations of text segments were then retrieved using analytically defined filters, and researchers compared, contrasted and synthesised content through interpretative reading.

Research ethics

The principles of research ethics spur reflections on how and why knowledge is generated, as well as on the nature of interactions between researchers and other stakeholders – from research participants to funders and colleagues. We have therefore gone beyond the narrow view of research ethics as 'compliance' and have sought to integrate research-ethical perspectives into all aspects of the project. The synergies with research methods are evident, for instance, in the attention given to how survey respondents and focus group participants experience their involvement in the project.

Research ethics and research integrity
MIGNEX Handbook Chapter 4
mignex.org/d013

15 Erdal et al. (2023).

1 The impacts of migration are multifaceted

Migration affects family members staying back through different channels: the absence of a family member, the receipt of remittances and/or as a source of new ideas and behaviours. In turn, this means that the impacts of migration are multifaceted and can even be contradictory.

Image: Adigrat Street (Ethiopia). Rod Waddington. CC BY-SA 2.0

Migration can be many things to many people

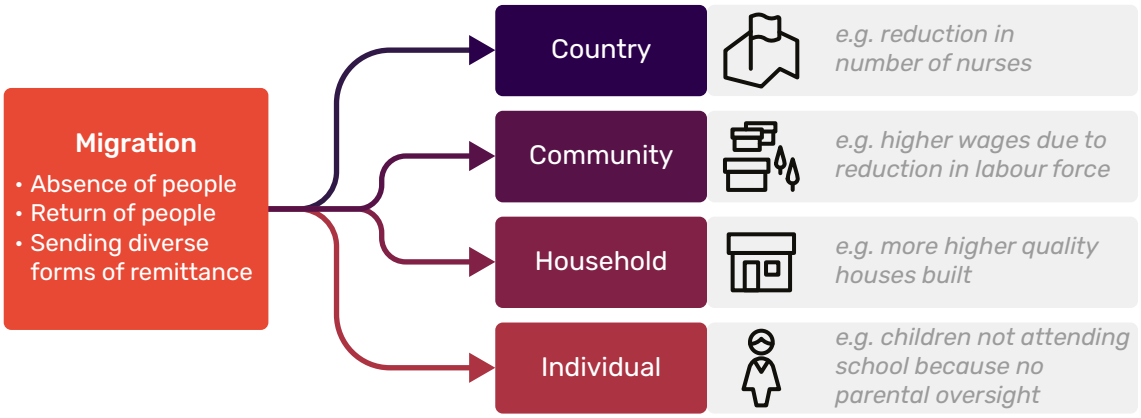
Migration can leave traces at different levels. Importantly, it does not just affect migrants themselves or their families, it also affects wider communities and countries (see Figure 4). And those effects can take many different forms, both positive and negative.

At the country level,[16] the outflow of skilled people – often referred to as 'brain drain' – can affect the provision of functioning public services, such as health care or education. On the other hand, in countries that rely heavily on migration, remittances can make an important contribution to overall gross domestic product (GDP). This is the case in Cabo Verde, for example, where remittances accounted for 14% of GDP in 2022.[17]

At the community level, the labour force composition may be altered when people leave, or norms, values and behaviours can change through transnational ties or when people return. The effects at the community level are elaborated in Chapters 3 and 5.

The most visible effects of migration are often at the household level. For instance, remittances that a household receives can be used to send children to school or to build a house.

Figure 4. The impacts of migration exist at different levels



Source: The authors.

16 In the MIGNEX analyses we excluded the country level as intended in the research design.
17 World Bank (2022).

And individuals can, of course, also be affected by migration. For example, the psychological effects of a family member leaving are often substantial.

The impacts of migration can thus be assessed by examining these different levels and aspects of migration, from *having a migrant family member, relative or friend abroad* to *receiving remittances*.

Remittance receipt is uncommon, but important

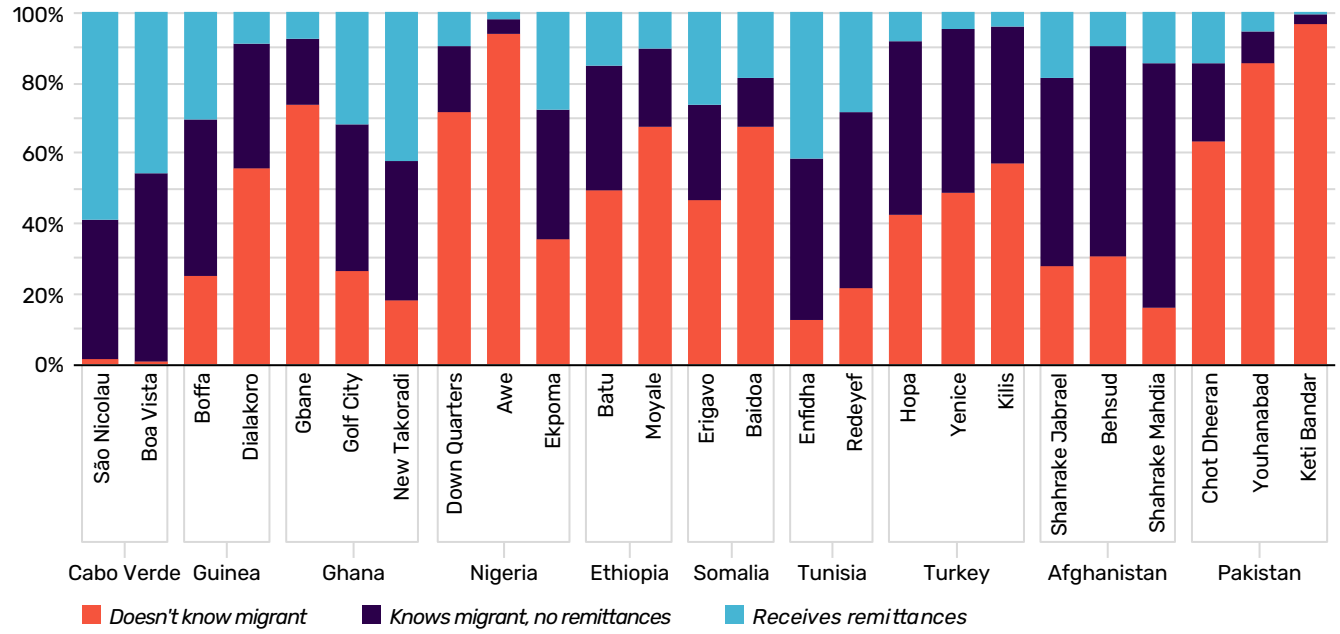
Remittances – the money sent back by migrants to family, relatives, friends or even the community – are one of the most tangible aspects of migration for those staying back. The ability to send remittances is often seen as the key reason for people to migrate.[18] As a woman from Ekpoma (Nigeria) explained, there is often a social expectation for migrants to send remittances: 'when a person travels and gets a good job, they start sending money to their families back here'.[19] However, not every migrant is willing or able to send remittances, or is able to do so continuously.

Indeed, remittance receipt amongst households staying back is not as common as is often assumed. We find that, across the 25 research areas, only one in five households receive remittances.[20] Furthermore, more than one-third have a family member, relative or friend who is currently abroad, but they have not received remittances in the past year. However, these patterns vary greatly across areas (see Figure 5). With international migration uncommon, virtually no households in Keti Bandar (Pakistan) have received remittances, while in São Nicolau (Cabo Verde) almost all people have friends or relatives abroad and 59% of households have received remittances.

"As a woman from Ekpoma (Nigeria) explained, there is often a social expectation for migrants to send remittances: 'when a person travels and gets a good job, they start sending money to their families back here'."

18 For instance, in Stark (1991).
19 Focus group NGA3C.
20 Drawing on MIGNEX survey items F01 (which asks respondents whether they have a family member, relative or friend living abroad) and F09 (which asks those who have, whether they have received remittances from any of these individuals in the past year).

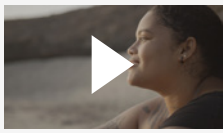
Figure 5. Remittance receipt across the MIGNEX research areas



Data source: MIGNEX survey dataset (restricted variant, v1). N=12,933. Based on survey items F01 and F09.

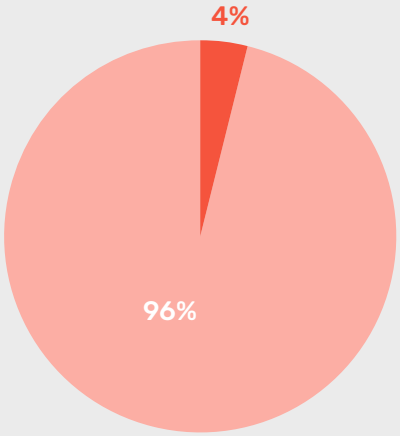
For those who do receive remittances, this financial support can make a key contribution to household well-being, as is discussed in Chapter 2. Receiving remittances has a positive effect on a range of different indicators from poverty reduction to providing a source of emergency money, across most research areas. Yet remittances are rarely the main income source that households rely on.

The island it hurts to leave
MIGNEX Video
mignex.org/Sao-Nicolau



Some migrants also invest in the community more broadly, often in infrastructure projects or charitable works. Figure 6 shows the awareness that people have of such migrant investments from abroad. Across all research areas, 16% of people are aware of investment by migrants in the local area.[21] In some, such as Baidoa (Somalia), almost half of people are aware of migrant investments. Such investments are often prominent and highly visible, as a woman in Ekpoma (Nigeria) explained: 'On Ikekogbe road, a road construction project was carried out and about 3 million Naira was needed to complete it.

Across all research areas, remittances are the most important income source for very few households

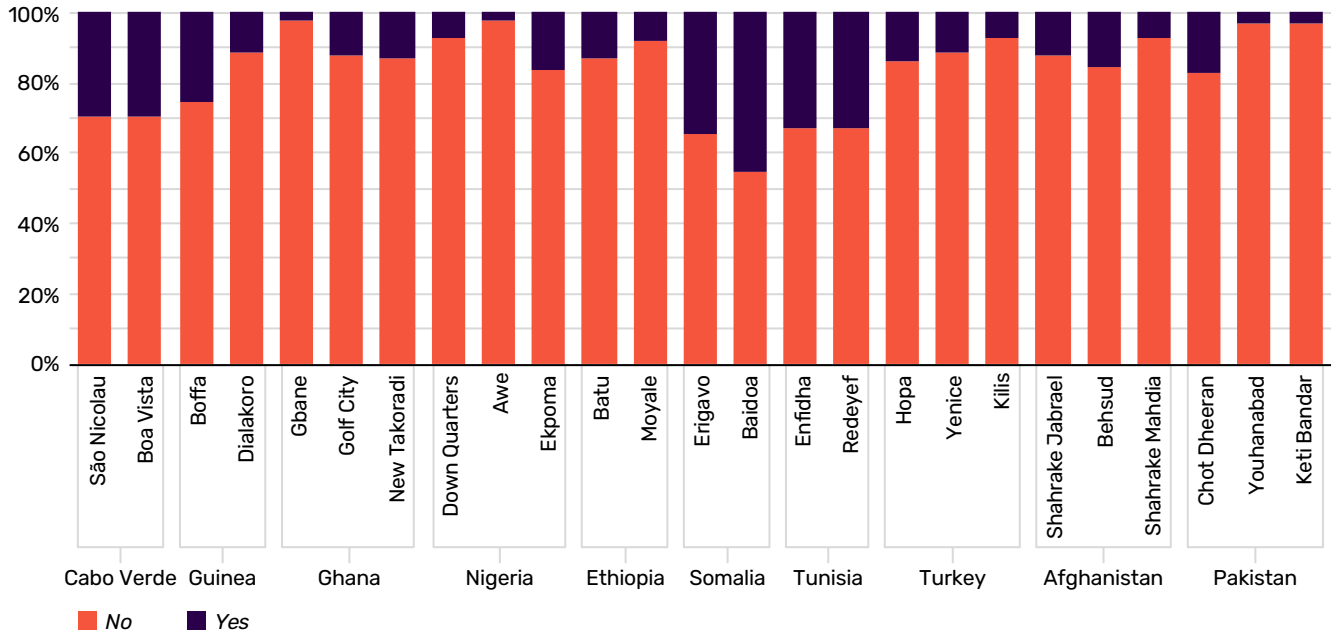


Source: MIGNEX survey (restricted variant, v1)

21 Based on survey item B14.

It was one person who migrated abroad that single handedly funded the road project.'[22] Others pointed out that the community also benefits indirectly, from the remittances spent by migrant families in local shops or used to hire local people, as further discussed in Chapter 3.

Figure 6. Awareness of migrant investment across the MIGNEX research areas



Data source: MIGNEX survey dataset (restricted variant, v1). N=12,933. Based on survey item B14.

The absence of people affects those staying back differently

Those migrating leave a gap in their families and communities and this absence can be felt deeply. For example, migration takes an emotional and social toll on family members staying back, especially if the migrant is a parent or is absent for a long time.[23] And this is not just a psychological burden: the contributions of the person to different care duties are often also missed. For example, children in migrant families where one or more parents are absent sometimes have worse educational

School of attendance of children in a household with migrants may be lower

Migrant is former household member	All secondary school age children enrolled: NO	All secondary school age children enrolled: YES
NO	37%	63%
YES	40%	60%

Source: MIGNEX survey (restricted variant, v1)

22 Focus group NGA3D.
23 Kandilige and Marchand (2023).

outcomes, when there is no responsible adult who ensures children are enrolled in and attending school,[24] amongst other reasons. We also find that for secondary school-aged children, migration of a household member is associated with lower secondary school enrolment of children in those households.[25] One potential explanation is that this is linked to a reduction in parental supervision.

The absence of people can also affect the community as a whole, as discussed in Chapter 3 and demonstrated in the case of Redeyef (Tunisia).

Different facets of migration can have contradictory effects

As well as migration having both positive and negative effects on families and communities, the different facets of migration – be it an absent family member or receipt of remittances – can also have different and even contradictory effects.[26] As we show in Chapter 3, there is rarely one generalisable trend; the effects vary across localities.

Take the example of school enrolment, there is no clear trend. As Figure 7 shows, remittance receipt is mostly positively associated with school enrolment of secondary school children, indicated by the red circles (in two of three research areas). Remittances are often used to pay for school fees or to pay for children to attend better schools. One example is Yenice (Turkey), where only 39% of

Redeyef (Tunisia)

Migration can affect families and the community more broadly in different ways, and these effects tend to vary over time. In Redeyef, a mining town in Tunisia, unemployment and feelings of hopelessness are high. There has been high out-migration to Europe for decades. Like in many other communities that have seen high levels of out-migration, the key period in the year when migrants visit Redeyef feels very different. Migrants often visit during the summer, bringing back gifts and money and treating family members. These annual summer holidays are very important for migrant families to maintain a strong connection to relatives abroad. The visits can therefore have a psychosocial impact on the families, and they can also positively affect the local economy.

Source: Kasavan et al. (2022).

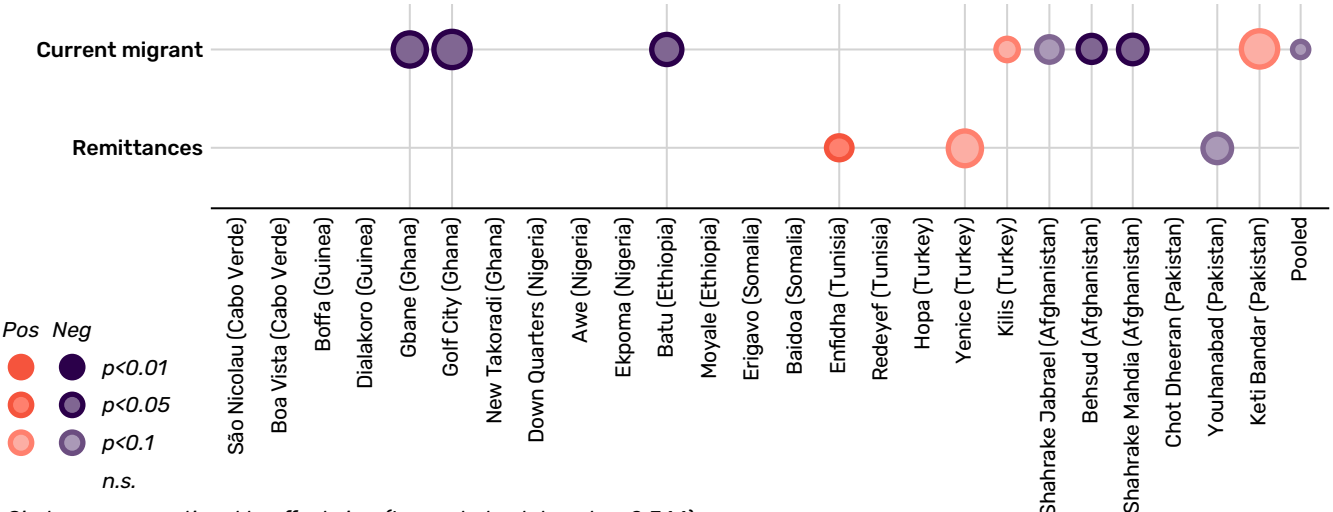
24 Jia et al. (2018); Liu et al. (2018).
25 Based on regression analysis in Marchand et al. (2023).
26 Marchand et al. (2023).

people find that public schools are good or very good.[27] Households receiving remittances are able to send their children to boarding schools, which are deemed to be of better quality.[28]

Having a family member, relative or friend currently abroad, on the other hand, mostly has a negative association with secondary school enrolment, shown by the purple circles in the figure. As explained previously, one potential explanation for this pattern is that the absence of parents could result in lower school enrolment. For instance, in Golf City (Ghana), where we do see this negative association, there is no public school within the area and therefore children must travel to neighbouring cities to attend school.[29] This can be costly, but it also means that unsupervised children (such as those with migrant parents) often do not attend school.

It is key to bear in mind the different facets of migration – and their, at times, contradictory effects – to understand how migration really affects individuals, households and communities.

Figure 7. Effects on enrolment of a household's secondary school-aged children



Note: The dependent variable is a dummy variable which measures whether all of a household's secondary school children are enrolled in school. The independent variables draw on survey items F01 (which asks whether a person has a family member, relative or friend living abroad) and F09 (which asks those that do whether they have received remittances in the past year). n.s.= no significant association found.

Data source: Regression analyses in Marchand et al. (2023).

27 Based on MIGNEX survey item A31.
28 Ensari et al. (2022).
29 Godin et al. (2022).

2 Remittances mostly have positive effects, but not exclusively so

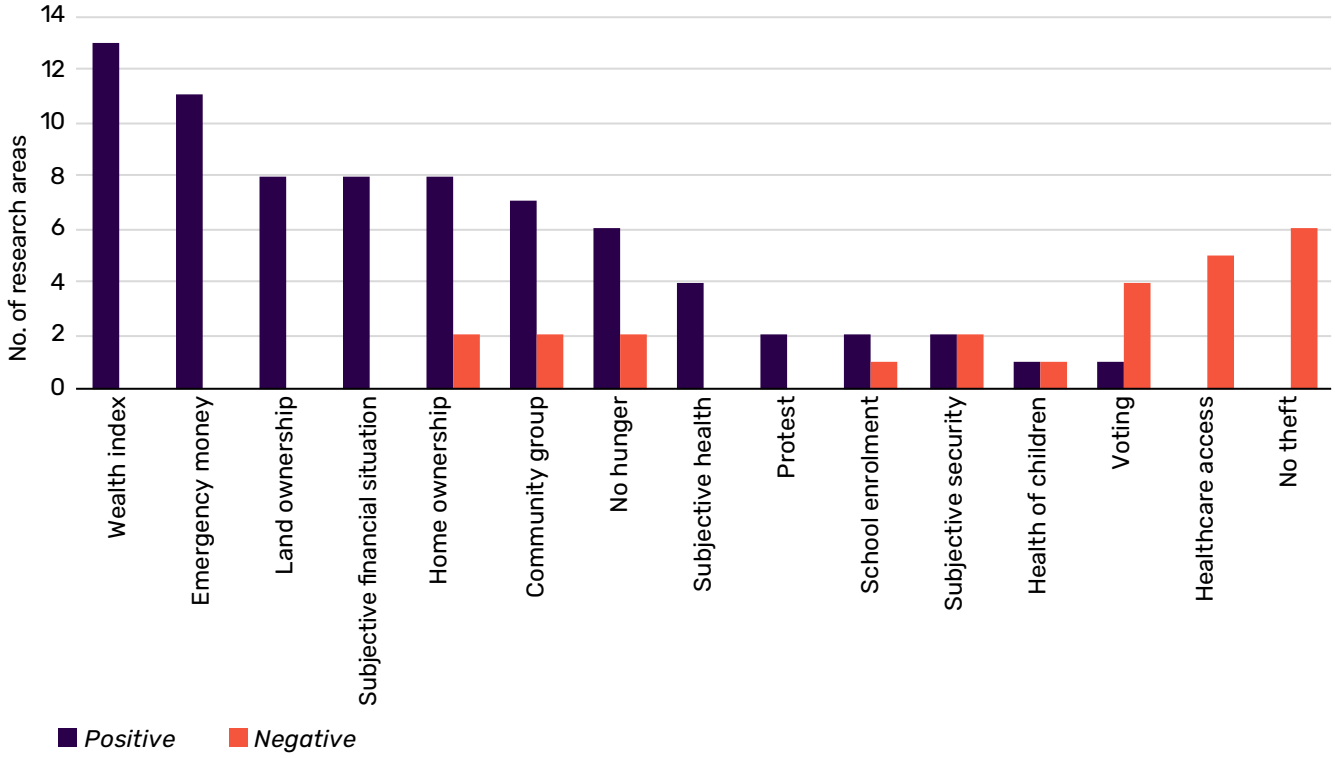
While receiving remittances is vital for many households, they do not solve all livelihood challenges. While receiving remittances is important in explaining higher wealth, they tend to not be enough to decrease poverty in a community.

Image: Chot Dheeran (Pakistan). Marta Bivand Erdal for MIGNEX.

Remittances bring a myriad of benefits

It is well known that the receipt of remittances can benefit migrant households as well as communities and countries of origin.[30] When talking to people about migration, they often described remittances as the main way that the positive impacts of migration are felt at a household and community level.[31] As Figure 8 shows, we also see more positive than negative effects at the household level across different MIGNEX research areas.[32]

Figure 8. Number of research areas with statistically significant associations between remittances and other indicators



Note: Based on coefficients from regressions run separately for each research area.

Data source: Based on coefficients from regression analyses in Marchand et al. (2023).

When looking only at households that have a family member, relative or friend abroad, we see that the receipt of remittances is associated with higher levels of wealth.[33] But there are manifold benefits for the families who receive remittances, not least meeting basic subsistence needs. As a woman

30 Andersson and Siegel (2020).
31 Qualitative analysis of focus groups in Kandilige and Marchand (2023).
32 Based on regression analysis in Marchand et al. (2023).
33 Rubio et al. (forthcoming).

in Kombolcha (Ethiopia) reflected: 'Many families in my neighbourhood rely only on remittances to make ends meet … [I]n rural Kombolcha, the reliance on remittances is particularly substantial.'[34]

There is also the understanding that remittances are beneficial for communities, through their multiplier effects. One man in Shahrake Jabrael (Afghanistan) explained:

> 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 flourishment of lives.[35]

Remittances are seen as particularly helpful for a community when they are used to help fund the building of infrastructure or when invested into local businesses that bring additional employment and prosperity to the community (see Chapter 3 also).

Remittances can have negative associations or be irrelevant

It is also the case that remittances can be associated with negative well-being outcomes or they can have no effect at all.[36] For example, we find that remittances are positively associated with household wealth in 13 research areas (Figure 9) but that they have no association (positively or negatively) in a further 12 areas. Communities that have more migrants in high-income countries are those that are generally better able to reap the benefits of higher remittances.[37]

São Nicolau (Cabo Verde)

São Nicolau is one of Cabo Verde's nine inhabited islands. Traditionally a farming and fishing community, international migration is a staple in the community and the effects can be clearly seen. Remittances to São Nicolau are among the highest in Cabo Verde with an average value of €580 per capita per year between 2016 and 2020. This is almost twice the level for Cabo Verde overall. There are clear indications across the island of how remittances are used – houses and businesses have been built by emigrants as well as the bridge and road in Ribeira da Prata, and the 'Emigrant's Saloon', a community social space built and maintained by a return migrant.

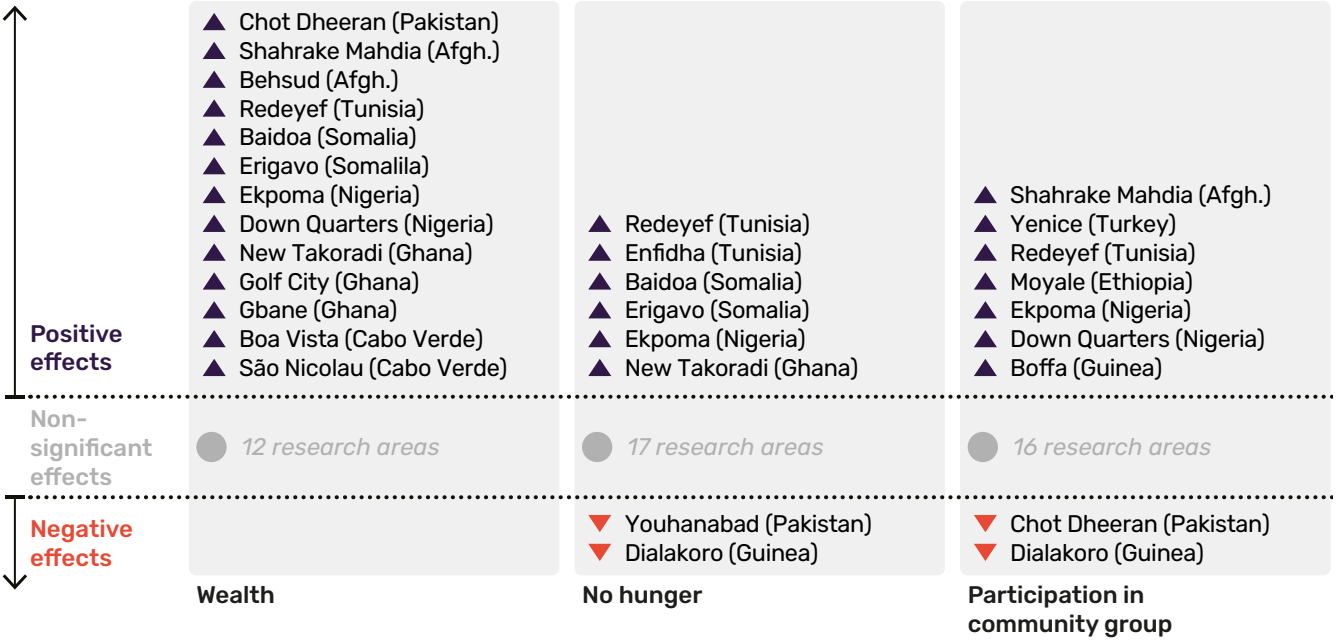
Source: Carling and Hagen-Zanker (2022).

34 Focus group ETH1A.
35 Focus group AFG1D.
36 Based on regression analysis in Marchand et al. (2023).
37 Rubio et al. (forthcoming).

For other outcomes, the picture is even more mixed. For example, the well-being indicator of no hunger (meaning no one in the household experienced hunger in the last month) shows mixed outcomes. Positive associations are seen in six research areas, negative associations in two areas and no associations in 17 areas. For participation in a community group, we again see mixed results. This points to the various ways that remittances can affect different well-being outcomes.

Dialakoro (Guinea) is one area that shows negative associations between remittances and both hunger and participation in a community group. Dialakoro is an isolated rural district near the Mali border. It has poor infrastructure and only 49% of homes have electricity. There is a tradition of migration to neighbouring countries to work in mining, which is often short-term and circular in nature, while international migration to Europe is rare. Collective remittances and diaspora investment are virtually non-existent as the majority of migrants abroad are just not able to afford it.[38] This means that both the type of migration and the local environment are not conducive to migration bringing large positive gains.[39]

Figure 9. Comparison of well-being outcomes of remittances across research areas



Note: Based on coefficients from regressions run separately for each research area.

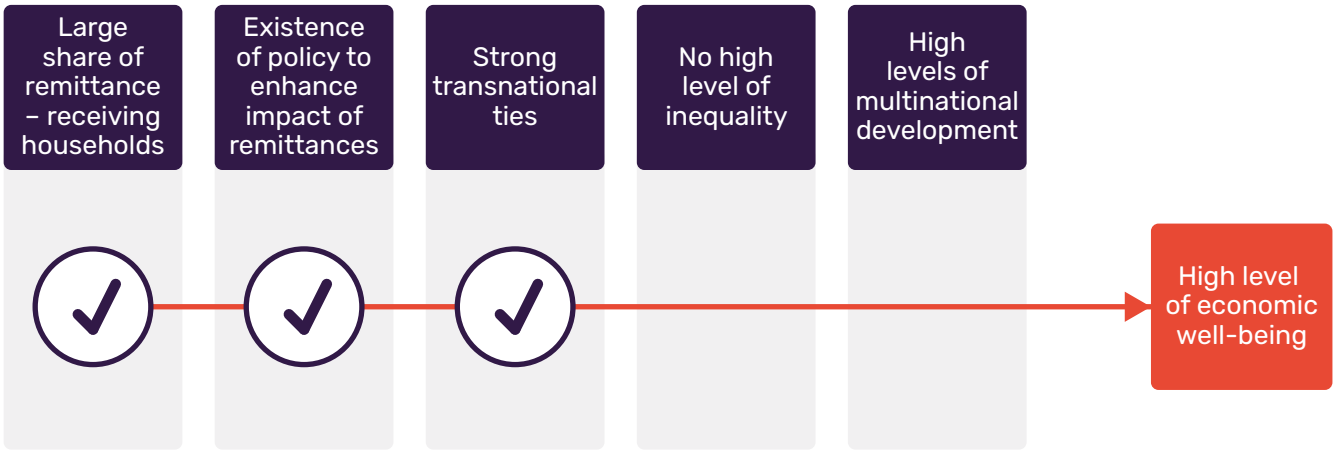
Data source: Regression analyses in Marchand et al. (2023).

38 Botta et al. (2022).
39 An additional explanation is that remittances are targeted to the most poor and needy households, i.e., those experiencing hunger. Our analysis here – like much migration research – suffers from potential endogeneity, with migration and the outcomes of interests affecting each other.

Remittances alone do not bring full economic benefits

Remittances often need to be coupled with other factors to see the greatest benefits. For example, we see higher economic well-being[40] in a local area when widespread receipt of remittances is coupled with policy to enhance the impacts of remittances as well as strong transnational ties (see Figure 10).[41] These results are produced through QCA (see Methodology section).

Figure 10.One of the combinations of factors contributing to high levels of economic well-being



Note: For the measurement and definition of each factor see Weisner and Czaika (2024).

Source: QCA results in Weisner and Czaika (2024).

These results show that, in research areas with high levels of economic well-being, remittances can play a role, but this is only in co-existence with strong social networks and a conducive policy environment. In fact, this combination of factors only holds for three areas: Ekpoma (Nigeria), Kombolcha (Ethiopia) and New Takoradi (Ghana). And only these three countries in our sample have implemented policies that aim to enhance the impact of remittances on the incomes of recipient households.[42] The pathway is perhaps not present for the other research areas within these countries because the impact of the policies is limited, they do not have a large share of remittance-receiving households or because they don't hold strong transnational ties.

40 The outcome 'High levels of economic well-being' comprises low poverty levels and high wealth levels in a research area.
41 Based on QCA. For all results see Weisner and Czaika (2024).
42 Godin and Vargas-Silva (2022).

These limited results invite us to dig deeper into the supportive structural conditions under which remittances can catalyze poverty alleviation and investment, and enhance economic well-being. The central importance of transnational ties, networks and social capital as a key facilitating factor for migration and development is further highlighted in Chapter 4.

Box 3. Policies to increase the effects of remittances

There are multiple approaches for policies related to remittances. For instance, governments may implement measures to maximise remittance inflows, such as incentive schemes to encourage higher remittances flows by reducing costs, or by making transfers more secure or quicker. Policies may also focus on influencing the utilisation of remittances, ranging from financial education and training to incentivising investments. Or policies may focus on initiatives like 'matching fund programmes', where governments match funds raised by migrant organisations for social or infrastructural projects in specific communities.

Source: OECD (2017); López-Córdova and Olmedo (2006).

3 Migration affects origin communities in diverse ways

Migration exerts diverse effects at the community level, which are less well understood than the effects on migrants themselves and their families. The impacts can be positive and negative and can result in changes in demographic, economic and social community dynamics.

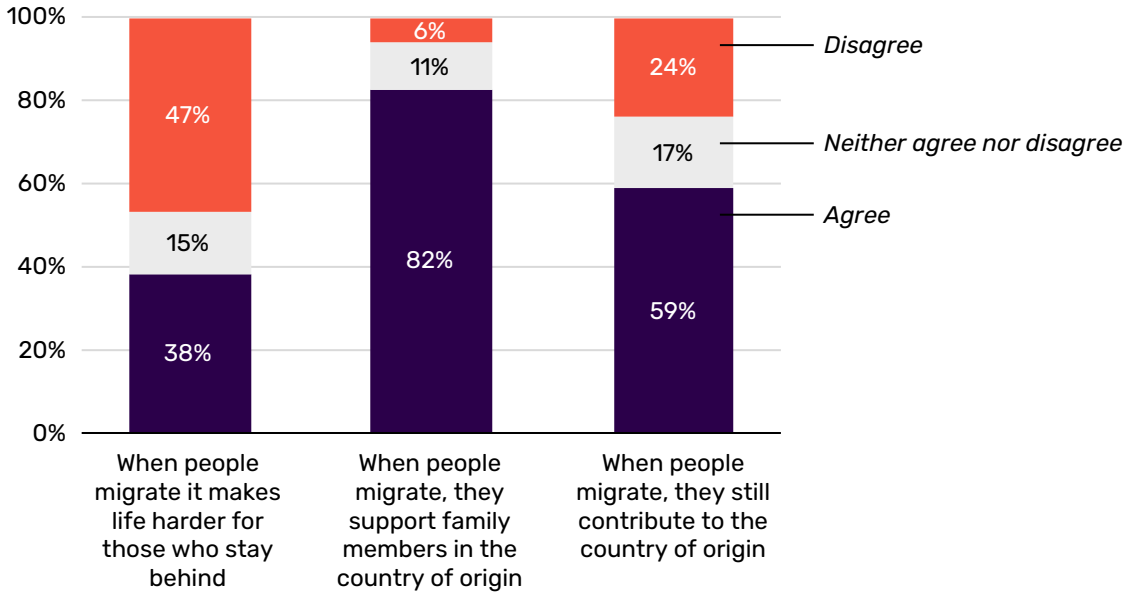
Image: São Nicolau (Cabo Verde). Jørgen Carling for MIGNEX.

People have mixed views on the local effects of migration

When migrants leave a community, this can have wide-ranging effects for those staying back, and people are aware of this. In general, people tend to see migration as being positive for those staying back (see Figure 11).

However, perceptions vary markedly across the research areas. For instance, in Epkoma (Nigeria), only 9% of people believe that migration makes life harder for those remaining, but in Behsud (Afghanistan), Keti Bandar (Pakistan), Kilis (Turkey) and Shahrake Jabrael (Afghanistan), over 65% hold this view. Except for Keti Bandar, irregular migration is common in these areas and there may be direct negative impacts such as loss of life, detention and economic strain.[43] The prevalence of such hardships likely contributes to the widespread pessimism among the local population regarding the consequences of migration for those who stay back.

Figure 11. Perceptions of the impacts of migration on communities



Data source: MIGNEX survey dataset (restricted variant, v1). N=12,933. Based on survey items C17, C18 and C19.

43 Akakhil et al. (2022); Alizada and Murray (2022); Ensari et al. (2022b).

Conversely, a notable majority (82%) believe that migrants support their families back home, with 59% recognising their contributions to the country of origin. But there is a stark contrast between research areas. In Erigavo (Somalia), only 36% of respondents see the benefits of migration for their country, versus in Saõ Nicolau (Cabo Verde), where a striking 93% acknowledge migrants' positive impact on their place of origin. As discussed in Chapter 2, São Nicolau maintains a strong connection with its emigrant population.[44]

When does migration lead to positive economic outcomes?
MIGNEX Policy Brief
mignex.org/d076b

However, concerns also surface among those affected by migration. Worries about a potential 'brain drain', population decline and economic stagnation were raised in group discussions.[45] The departure of large proportions of the youth cohort raises important questions regarding the long-term sustainability and development of the communities of origin.[46] A woman in Ekpoma (Nigeria) reflected on this:

> [Migration] is not a good thing because 80-90% of the youths in Uromi have travelled 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.[47]

The local context shapes many of these effects, as discussed in Chapter 4. But beyond context, people discussed that the experiences and occupation of the migrant, the depth of their ties to their place of origin, and the motivations that underscore their journey are pivotal determinants of the extent and ability of migrant involvement their communities of origin. In the focus group discussions in Shahrake Jabrael (Afghanistan), for example, people discussed the merits of regular versus irregular migration for both the migrant and those who stay back. In addition, the potential contributions of migrants in Europe were discussed as being more beneficial compared to those of their counterparts who had migrated

44 Carling and Hagen-Zanker (2022).
45 As part of the MIGNEX project, 104 group discussions were conducted with young adults having either strong or weak personal links to migration in 26 local communities in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.
46 Kandilige and Marchand (2023).
47 Focus group NGA3D.

to Iran. Throughout the discussions there was also a shared appreciation for the transformative power of remittances, while worries of an area left hollowed by migration became apparent at the same time.[48]

Overall, these discussions and those in many other research areas hint at the complex tapestry of migration dynamics that people affected by migration perceive in their daily lives. Some migrants emerge as conscientious contributors to community development, actively engaged in fostering positive change, while others, due to their migration experiences or propelled by personal pursuits, assume a more detached role.

"Some migrants emerge as conscientious contributors to community development, actively engaged in fostering positive change, while others, due to their migration experiences or propelled by personal pursuits, assume a more detached role."

Positive and negative effects occur at the same time

It is challenging to understand the effects of migration on communities because, often, positive and negative effects occur within the same areas. This, in turn, makes it hard to disentangle whether migration is 'good' or 'bad' for specific communities.

Some migrants bring substantial benefits to communities (see Chapters 1 and 2) and fuel local economic improvements. Construction projects and the establishment of small and medium-sized businesses and factories, for example, are often attributed to remittances. The ability to invest in such ventures is seen as beneficial for the wider community and spurs growth and development.[49] A woman in Shahrake Mahdia (Afghanistan) described this phenomenon:

> 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.[50]

48 Focus groups AFG1A, AF1C and AFG1D; see also Alizada and Murray (2022) for more information on migration and development dynamics in Shahrake Jabrael.
49 Kandilige and Marchand (2023).
50 Focus group AFG3B.

Migrants themselves also invest directly in their community of origin. This ranges from infrastructural developments to the creation of employment opportunities. People in Down Quarters (Nigeria) discussed the contribution of a migrant to the refurbishment of the local inter-faith cemetery. Formerly neglected and overgrown, the cemetery has been revitalised through migrant donations.[51] In Boa Vista (Carbo Verde), which was once a typical emigration society sustained by remittances, migrant investment has played a significant role in shaping the local economy. While remittances still support nearly half of young adult households with migrant connections, only a small percentage consider them their primary source of income. Instead, migrant investors have been instrumental in small-scale ventures, particularly in the tourism sector (see Box 4). Around one-third of young adults are aware of such migrant investments in Boa Vista.[52]

Box 4. Migration and tourism: economic interplay in local communities

The impact of migration on tourism is often overlooked, but it plays a pivotal role in local economies. Migrants, especially from Cabo Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Tunisia, contribute significantly by returning to their origin communities for holidays. In this way they inject life and finances into local economies, fostering increased consumer spending and boosting businesses. Additionally, migrants promote further tourism by raising awareness, sharing positive experiences and, in some cases, investing in the tourism industry.

In Ekpoma (Nigeria), the diaspora has invested in at least three prominent hotels in the area. Despite challenges like poor transportation, in many communities there is optimism for local development fostered by tourism. However, group discussions also highlighted shifts in local economies, with locals seeking opportunities in more established tourist hubs and leaving the community. Overall, the intricate relationship between migration and tourism underscores the potential for positive outcomes amid evolving challenges.

Source: Kandilige and Marchand (2023).

51 Umaru Adamu et al. (2022).
52 Carling and Murray (2022).

However, views are less positive in areas where out-migration is high. Depopulation and a reduction in the productive labour force are key concerns for many, especially if those with specific skills leave a community. A man in Shahrake Mahdia (Afghanistan) explained this vividly:

> 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 to the shop and went to Europe. This has put the community in problems.[53]

Migration acts as a double-edged sword, offering financial aid for essential projects like road construction, and leaving towns empty with a smaller labour force.

"Depopulation and a reduction in the productive labour force are key concerns for many, especially if those with specific skills leave a community."

Chot Dheeran (Pakistan)

In Chot Dheeran, migration presents a mix of both positive and negative impacts on the community. On the positive side, the financial contributions of migrants abroad have significantly enhanced local welfare. For instance, migrant donations facilitated the purchase of an ambulance, which has substantially improved healthcare accessibility in the village. Furthermore, the accumulated wealth of some migrants has spurred local investments, resulting in small businesses that have created job opportunities and bolstered the village's economic prosperity.

However, the spirit and social fabric of the village changes when people migrate, harming cultural traditions and social bonds. Families experience emotional hardships and strained relationships, and children often experience distress. Moreover, the departure of migrants can disrupt the village's workforce, causing labour shortages and impacting agricultural productivity.

Source: Erdal et al. (2022); Kandilige and Marchand (2023).

53 Focus group AFG3A.

Migration leads to change through imitation

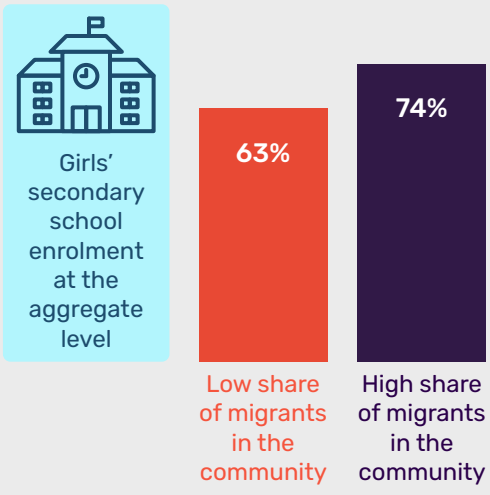
Migrants can also have indirect effects on those who stay back. This occurs at the collective level via a so-called *demonstration effect*. This is one kind of indirect effect of migration on development, as also discussed in Chapter 5.

Demonstration effects refer to the positive or negative ways in which migration can affect non-migrants through what they see and observe. On one hand, the 'brain gain' literature suggests that when individuals observe the benefits of remittances from migrants in their community, it can inspire them to pursue education and skills in the hope of migrating themselves eventually. Ultimately, this can lead to an increase in the average human capital of the country of origin.[54]

Conversely, demonstration effects may undermine the perceived necessity of education for future migration. In some contexts, societal norms or prevailing narratives may emphasise the allure of low-skilled jobs abroad over the potential benefits of education. This phenomenon can lead to a devaluation of educational attainment among certain groups, as has been seen in some regions of Mexico.[55]

Measurement of demonstration effects can be explored through variables such as the share of people acquainted with migrants abroad and the diversity of destinations chosen by migrants from a particular area. These variables offer insights into the extent of exposure to migrant experiences and the diversity of migration patterns observed within a community. For example, a higher prevalence of individuals with ties to migrants abroad may indicate greater exposure to the potential benefits or challenges associated with migration; while a broader spectrum of destination choices suggests a more nuanced understanding of migration dynamics and opportunities.[56]

Communities with more migrants tend to have higher school enrolment of girls



Source: MIGNEX survey (restricted variant, v1)

54 Beine et al. (2001); Mountford (1997).
55 McKenzie and Rapoport (2011).
56 Memon et al. (2023).

We find that a higher number of emigrants in a community correlates with a higher level of girls' school enrolment in the same community.[57] This suggests that the migration of others indirectly results in higher school enrolment in areas of origin. It indicates that the migration experiences of others might positively influence educational participation specifically for girls, possibly due to the perceived benefits associated with education.

Additionally, we identify a similar trend between higher levels of migration and increased civic participation. This could be the result of exposure to new ideas, experiences and economic prospects brought about by migration, as further explored in Chapter 5.[58]

57 See Chapter 1 for a discussion on the direct relationship between migration and educational enrolment of children.
58 Memon et al. (2023).

4 The effects of migration are shaped by local context

Understanding the effects of migration across communities reveals nuanced landscapes. Divergent outcomes underscore the complex interplay of migration variables and local conditions where transnational ties are a key facilitating factor between migration and positive well-being outcomes.

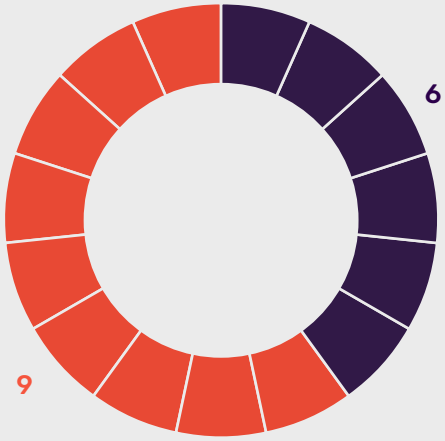
Image: New Takoradi (Ghana). Marie Godin for MIGNEX.

The well-being effects of migration vary across communities

Understanding the effects of migration across communities reveals a nuanced landscape. For nine out of 15 different aspects of well-being,[59] having a family member, relative or friend living abroad results in differing outcomes across the research areas.[60] This means the relationship is positive in some areas and negative in others. There is a consistent pattern across the communities for only six well-being outcomes.[61]

We find such diverging outcomes for subjective health status[62] and its relationship with migration, for example. Generally, those people who know a migrant abroad or a returnee, or who receive remittances report higher subjective levels of health than those who are not directly affected by migration.

Knowing a current migrant has a divergent effect across research areas for 9 of 15 well-being outcomes.



Note: Based on coefficients from regressions run separately for each research area.

Data source: Regression analyses in Marchand et al. (2023).

Yet, we see three exceptions. One is Keti Bandar (Pakistan), where having a return migrant in the household negatively affects the subjective health status of the respondent. Keti Bandar is a poor area, which has seen very high levels of domestic out-migration (mostly to cities away from the coast) but low levels of return migration. One thing residents like about the area is the clean air and unpolluted environment. This is also something that those who migrate miss. It is therefore possible that migrants who faced health challenges abroad

59 The 15 indicators are: 1) Wealth index, 2) Home ownership, 3) Land ownership, 4) Subjective financial situation, 5) Secondary school enrolment, 6) Healthcare access, 7) Subjective health, 8) Health of children, 9) Food security, 10) Voting in the last election, 11) Participation in a protest, 12) Ability to obtain emergency money, 13) Participation in a community group, 14) No experiences of theft and 15) Subjective security. For full information on the operationalisation of these indicators, see Marchand et al. (2023).

60 See regression analyses in Marchand et al. (2023). The findings for receiving remittances and having a return migrant (family, relative, friends) in the household are equally diverse.

61 The six indicators are: 1) Wealth index (positive), 2) Land ownership (positive), 3) Subjective financial situation (positive), 4) Food security (positive), 5) Ability to obtain emergency money (positive) and 6) No experiences of theft (negative). For the full results, see Marchand et al. (2023).

62 Based on survey item D7. See Marchand et al. (2023) for details.

returned to this environment. In turn, this can affect the returnee migrant's household because there is an extra, possibly still sick, person or the household may miss remittances that were previously sent. Such a finding is an anomaly though and it is very specific to the context.[63]

The effects of migration interact with local contextual factors

The divergent effects of migration relate to the fact that most aspects of migration do not operate in isolation. Rather, they interact with other elements to shape economic outcomes, and different combinations of migration-related aspects can lead to the same outcome.

A high level of economic well-being in a community is one such outcome. The QCA results show how different migration-related aspects interrelate to contribute to high levels of economic well-being, and how structural conditions matter too. The results further highlight that different combinations of factors can act in contrary ways, depending on how they combine with other contextual factors.[64]

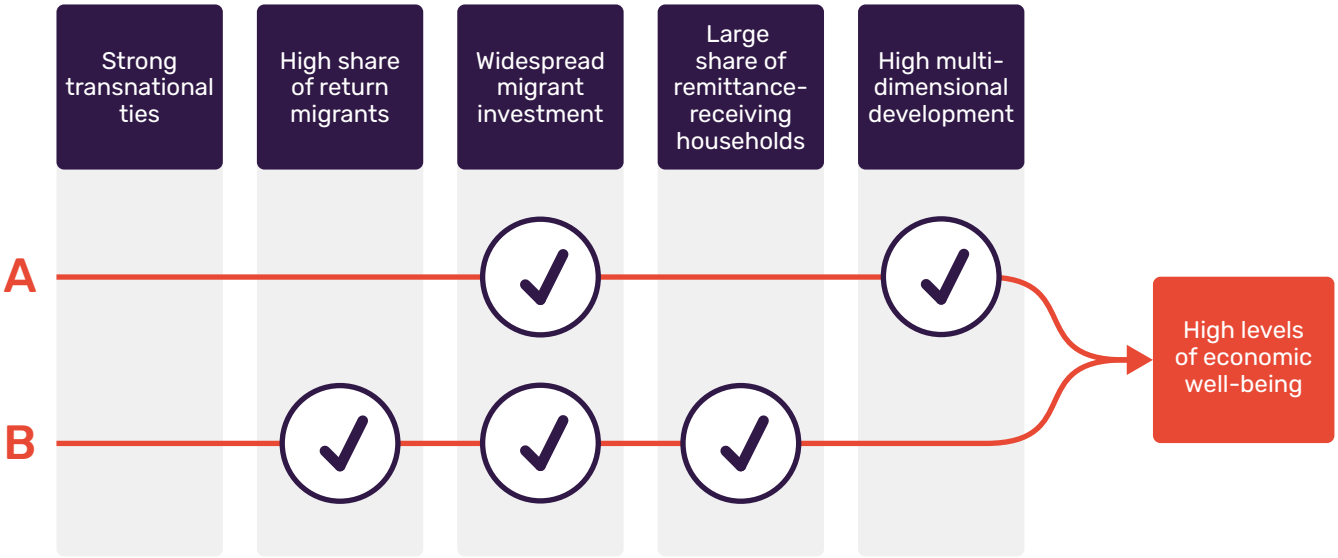
One example is differing levels of multidimensional development.[65] In some research areas, an advanced level of development paired with widespread migrant investments leads to higher levels of economic well-being (see Path A in Figure 12). To illustrate this, let us take the example of Erigavo (Somalia). The town has seen significant improvements in security and infrastructure over the last decade. Challenges such as droughts have

"The divergent effects of migration relate to the fact that most aspects of migration do not operate in isolation. Rather, they interact with other elements to shape economic outcomes, and different combinations of migration-related aspects can lead to the same outcome."

63 Erdal et al. (2022); Marchand et al. (2023).
64 For the full results see Weisner and Czaika (2024).
65 The level of multidimensional development in the research considers the three domains of the economy, governance and security, and it was constructed based on three indices: 1) Good governance: a combination of five sub-indices, namely a) Quality of public services in health and education (survey items A31, D04), b) Governance index (J08-10, J13), c) Perception of government quality (J11, J14), d) Infrastructure improvement (RAIR code A), e) Corruption (J14); 2) High security: a combination of three sub-indices, namely a) Safety perception (K01), b) Level of insecurity and violence in research area (RAIR code H), c) Experience of insecurity and violence (K03-07); 3) Low unemployment: unemployment index based on labour force status 'unemployed' (B02).

impacted agriculture and young people are seeking alternative livelihoods in various sectors. Strong connections with the Erigavo diaspora contribute significantly to the local economy. Notably, migrant investments, such as the diaspora-funded construction of a road between the close-by port and Erigavo, are expected to further boost economic growth and regional mobility. This exemplifies how a combination of a high level of multidimensional development when paired with widespread migrant investments can lead to positive economic outcomes for a community.[66]

Figure 12. Combinations of community-level factors that lead to high levels of economic well-being



Note: For the measurement and definition of each factor see Weisner and Czaika (2024).

Source: Model 1 of the QCA results in Weisner and Czaika (2024).

In contrast, Path B contains only migration-related factors. It shows that, in some research areas, a high level of migrant return coupled with remittances and migrant investments can contribute to higher levels of economic well-being. In this case, a high level of multidimensional development is not necessarily needed for better well-being outcomes, but it can in a way be substituted by the migration-related inflow of economic or social capital.

66 Ahmed et al. (2022).

These two examples alone underscore the complexity of factors influencing economic well-being within communities and they emphasise the importance of understanding the interplay between migration-related aspects and structural conditions. Furthermore, it is important to understand that the combinations of factors do not necessarily lead to the same outcomes in all areas, due to further differences in contextual factors that were not included in the analysis. For example, in Boffa (Guinea), all three migration-related factors are present, but the expected outcome is not observed due to local specificities.

Tailor shop in Erigavo (Somalia), which has been thriving in recent years with improvements in the security situation. Fatuma Ahmed for MIGNEX.

Boffa (Guinea)

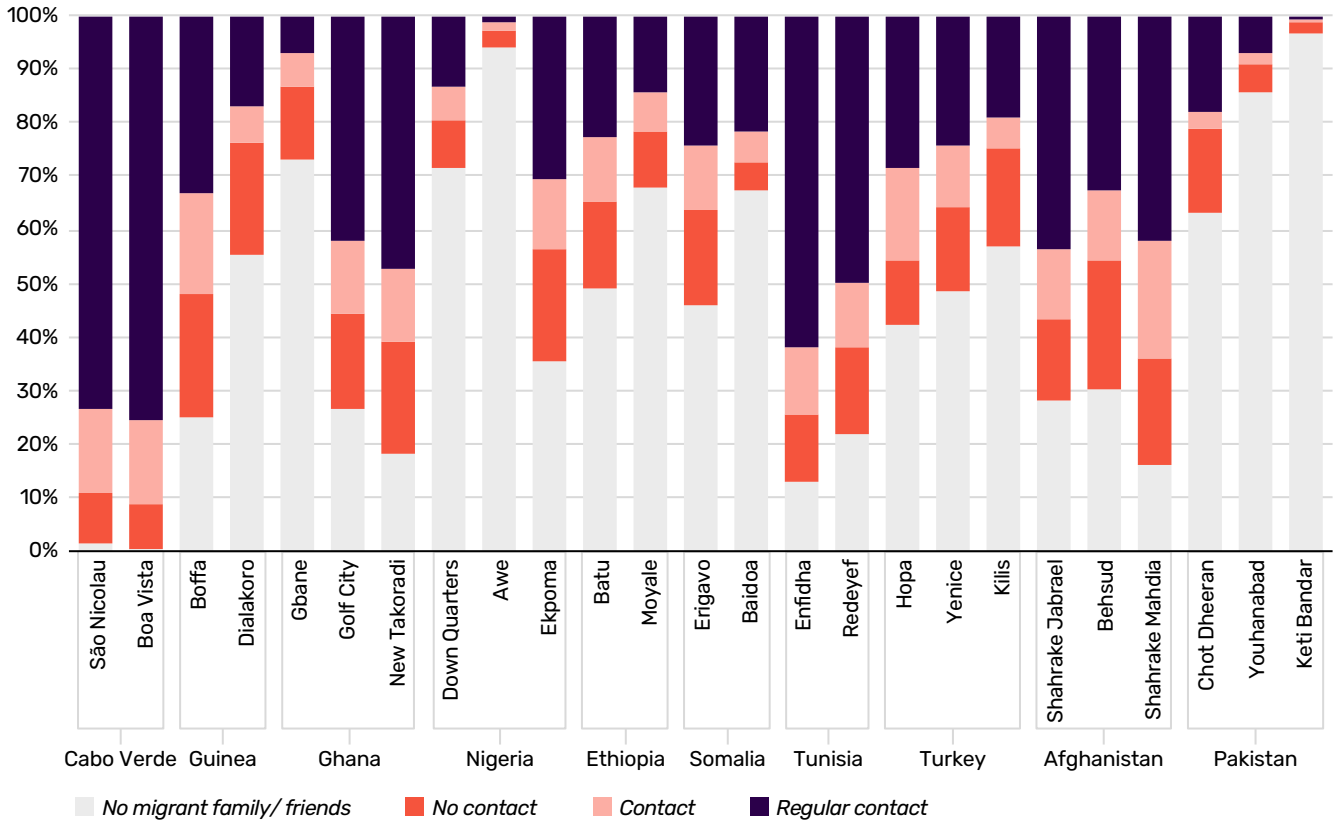
In Boffa, the international mining and fishing industries pose a threat to traditional livelihoods, particularly artisan agricultural production. Traditional fishing is now almost impossible due to low yields and environmental degradation, and because harbours have been acquired by mining industries. Simultaneously, investments from migrants, driven by a desire for local recognition, garner significant attention in Boffa, where 26% of people indicate awareness of such investments. Surprisingly, both these migrant investments and foreign direct investments do not consistently contribute to the local economy. Instead, livelihood hardships are high, with 82% of young adults facing challenges in earning a living and supporting their families. This is because the mining industry has impacted livelihoods, but mostly in negative ways, and local people gain few of its benefits. In this context, investments by migrants, therefore, are not able to make significant changes or contribute to higher levels of economic well-being.

Source: Botta et al. (2022); Weisner and Czaika (2024).

Strong ties with migrants can foster development

Strong transnational ties are one mechanism that consistently leads to positive outcomes for communities. This entails not only knowing a migrant but also being in contact with them. On average, 40% of people who have a family member, relative or friend who is a migrant, and had been in contact with them in the past year. Some research areas, particularly those with high migration outflows, see much more frequent exchanges. For example, in São Nicolau and Boa Vista (Cabo Verde), more than 70% of people are in regular contact with migrants (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Transnational ties with migrants

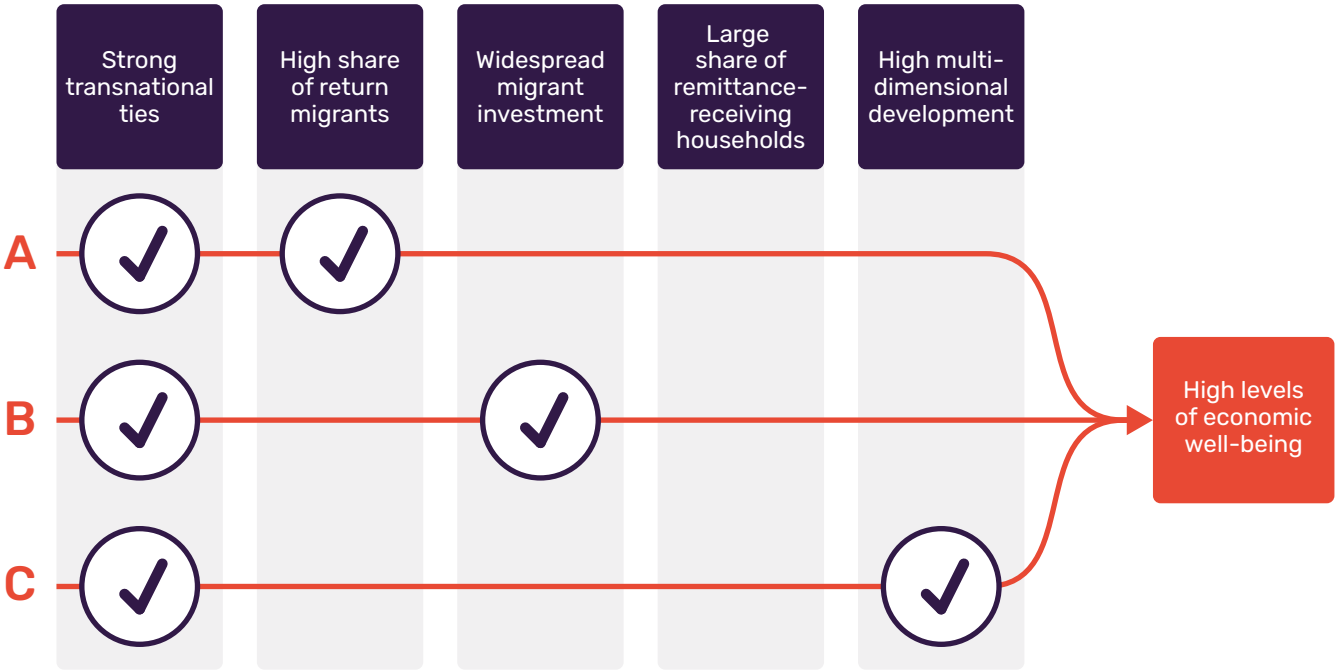


Data source: MIGNEX survey dataset (restricted variant, v1). N=12,933. Based on survey items F07 and F08.

Strong transnational ties can affect development outcomes – indirectly by changing norms and values (see Chapter 5) but also in interaction with other elements.

Across communities, the intertwining of robust transnational ties with other conditions consistently yields higher levels of economic well-being, as shown in Figure 14. For example, strong transnational ties and high rates of return jointly contribute to higher levels of economic well-being. The same is true when such ties occur alongside high levels of migrant investments in a community.[67]

Figure 14. Strong transitional ties combined with other factors lead to economic well-being



Note: For the measurement and definition of each factor see Weisner and Czaika (2024).

Source: Model 1 of QCA results in Weisner and Czaika (2024).

This highlights that inflows of people or capital alone do not automatically lead to higher wealth and lower poverty – the effects of both of these aspects only manifest in full under certain conditions. This is when they are accompanied by ties and networks that represent social capital and that facilitate the re-integration of returnees or harness the full potential of migrant investments through local knowledge and targeted investment strategies.

67 This is a continuation of the QCA results of Model 1 in Weisner and Czaika (2024).

Such networks serve as conduits for information exchange, resource sharing and mutual support among migrants and their communities of origin and destination. By tapping into these networks, migrants can access job opportunities, investment projects and social capital, all of which play a crucial role in enhancing their economic well-being as well as that of the entire community.[68] Furthermore, strong ties between a community and a migrant fosters a sense of communal responsibility. They prompt migrants to actively engage in initiatives that benefit their communities, thereby enriching social cohesion and collective welfare. Therefore, the relevance of strong transnational ties also extends beyond the economic realm, as further explored in Chapter 5.

68 Also see Weisner and Czaika (2024).

5 Migration can change norms and values

Migration can have numerous indirect effects on communities of origin through the sharing of ideas, behaviours and social capital. Norms and values can be transformed within an area, which in turn can affect development outcomes, both positively and negatively.

Image: Behsud (Afghanistan). Tahmina Akakheil for MIGNEX.

Migrants send more than money

Migrants do not just send money back home, they also share new knowledge, ideas, practices, skills and social capital. These are known as **social remittances**, a term described as local-level, migrant-driven cultural diffusion.[69] As one woman from Kombolcha (Ethiopia) explained, through the process of migration 'many cultural traits are shared and exchanged. We gain knowledge from [migrants].'[70]

These exchanges – be they informal or very explicit, as in the carnival celebrating migration in New Takoradi (Ghana) – also enable people to learn more about the experiences of migrants and migration's wide-ranging impacts. As such, they may drive migration aspirations, as explored in MIGNEX Report *New insights on the causes of migration*.[71]

Often, social remittances relate to very specific skills and practices that then cultivate development in origin communities. A concrete example is a new way of construction using plasterboard and modern tools that was brought back by migrants to São Nicolau (Cabo Verde).[72] Other skills brought back might be less tangible, as described by a man in Chot Dheeran (Pakistan):

New Takoradi (Ghana)

New Takoradi is a small town built for those displaced by the expansion of an industrial port. Out-migration is high, with 82% of young adults having family or friends living abroad. Every year between Christmas and New Year, residents and the wider diaspora come together to celebrate the *Ankos* (anchor) festival. The festival centres around a parade along New Takorardi's main thoroughfare, with music and dancing. Groups dress up in elaborate costumes, often representing migration destination countries, such as Spain. Thus, the groups showcase different destination countries and often emphasise the benefits of regular migration. The costumes and other festival costs are largely paid for by migrants. Migrants travel back to join in the celebrations, and people from elsewhere in Ghana join in too. This festival is a celebration of migration and all it has to offer to the development of migrants and their communities.

Source: Kandilige et al. (2022).

69 See Levitt (1998), where the term was first coined.
70 Focus group ETH1A.
71 Carling et al. (2024).
72 Focus group CPV1D.

> 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.[73]

New ideas, skills or ways of doing things can thus drive change in communities of origin. More broadly, these transfers of knowledge and technology have been shown to then foster economic development in origin countries.[74]

Social remittances can change norms and values

As social remittances diffuse through communities, they can change norms and values within a society. Such changes can be perceived as both negative and positive within origin communities. A man in Down Quarters (Nigeria) deplored the new habits people return with and how this affects others in the community:

> 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.[75]

A man in Youhanabad (Pakistan), on the other hand, assessed the social remittances brought back and their effect on origin communities as being more positive:

> And migration also leaves 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.[76]

Social remittances can thus transform societal norms, though not always in ways preferred by all community members. One key area where we see this is gender attitudes. Gender values can morph through the transmission of values from host to origin communities.

The invisible effects of migration
MIGNEX Video
mignex.org/invisible-effects

73 Focus group PAK1C.
74 Gelb and Krishnan (2018); Kerr (2008).
75 Focus Group NGA1C.
76 Focus Group PAK2D.

On the whole, gender norms are shown to become more progressive. For instance, return migrants subtly change gender norms by demonstrating more egalitarian behaviours, such as sharing housework or equitable treatment of daughters and sons.[77] MIGNEX analysis shows that experience of migration – knowing a migrant, having been a migrant or a higher share of migrants in the community – is associated with less conservative attitudes on gender norms.[78]

At the aggregate level, those who know migrants hold less conservative gender attitudes

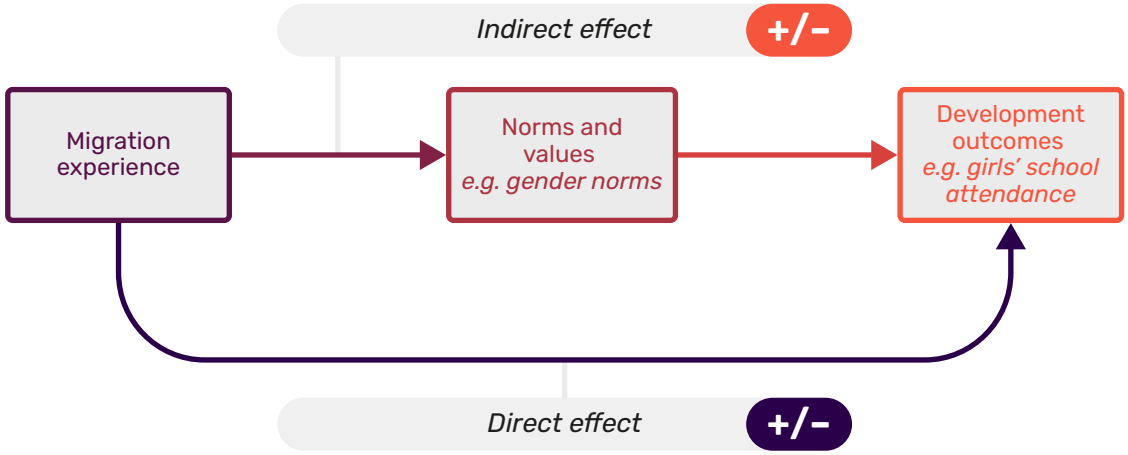
Has migrant	Agrees that education is more important for boys than girls: NO	YES
NO	77%	23%
YES	87%	13%

Source: MIGNEX survey (restricted variant, v1)

Changed norms can affect development outcomes

Migratory experiences may affect community norms and attitudes, such as concerning gender equality, which in turn can affect development outcomes, like increasing girls' school enrolment. These are described as indirect effects of migration.[79] Both the direct and indirect effects of migration on development outcomes can be negative or positive, as shown in Figure 15. This means direct and indirect effects can potentially complement or cancel out each other, or one effect can dominate.

Figure 15. Direct and indirect effects of migration

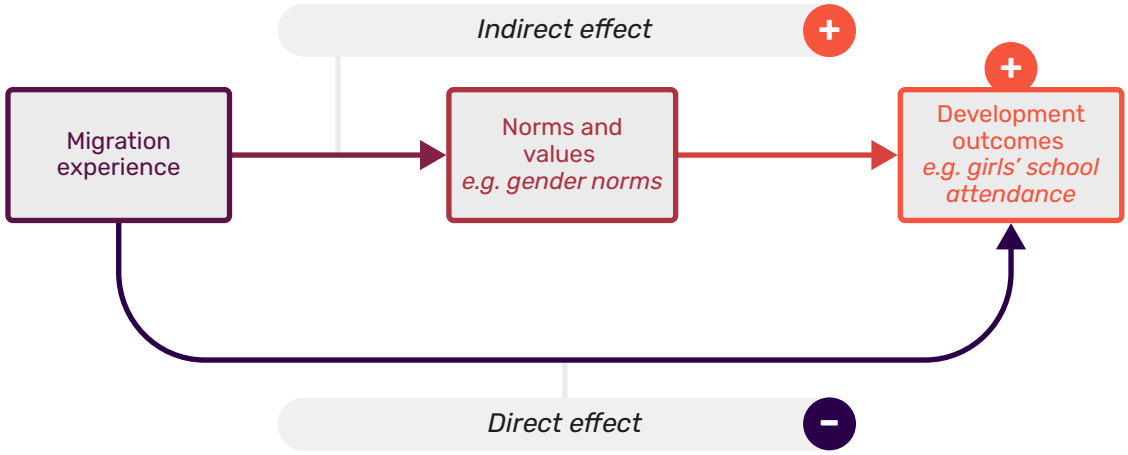


Source: The authors.

77 Barrett (2014); Mangiavacchi and Piccoli (2022).
78 Based on regressions in Memon et al. (2022).
79 The demonstration effect discussed in Chapter 3 is also a type of indirect effect.

Indeed, looking at the MIGNEX data at the aggregate level, we find that changes in gender norms observed for different measures of migration (such as knowing a migrant abroad or receiving remittances) are associated with an increase in girls' school enrolment in the same community.[80] The direct effect (via remittances) from these different measures of migration, on the other hand, is much smaller and negative, resulting in a decrease in girls' school enrolment. The large and positive indirect effect outweighs the direct effect, however, as shown in Figure 16. This means that, overall, migration increases girls' school enrolment, mediated by the positive effects on gender norms and values.

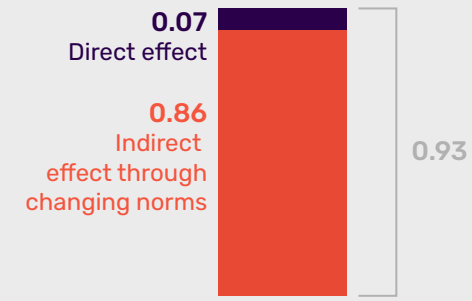
Figure 16. Direct and indirect effects of migration for girls' school enrolment



Source: The authors.

Still looking at the aggregate level, we also find that higher levels of emigration, knowing a migrant abroad or remittance receipt are positively correlated with higher civic participation in communities of origin.[81] Civic participation includes people's participation in community or voluntary groups, which often advocate for and work to address issues of concern within the community.

Remittance receipt is correlated with higher participation in community groups



Source: Based on regression analyses in Memon et al. (2023).

80 Drawing on regression findings in Memon et al. (2023).
81 Drawing on regression findings in Memon et al. (2023).

Part of this overall, positive effect is accounted for by a direct effect. For instance, receiving remittances may allow households to participate in community groups when there is a financial cost involved, or other implicit costs associated with attending, such as the expectation to be well-dressed.

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However, there is also an indirect effect through changed norms and values. Hearing from migrants about their experiences and observations on what constitutes good governance could change a person's perception of government[82] and hence indirectly affect their likelihood of participating in community groups.

82 Barsbai et al. (2017); Ivlevs and King (2017).

6 Return migration can foster development, under certain circumstances

Return migration can have positive effects on development, with migrants bringing back resources, skills or ideas. But the destination country and the form and scale of return mediate these effects, as do conditions in the communities migrants are returning to.

Image: Batu (Ethiopia). Camille Kasavan for MIGNEX.

Return migration can lead to many positive well-being outcomes

It is well known in the literature that return migration can have positive effects on well-being in countries of origin.[83] Return migrants can bring back financial resources accumulated abroad as well as skills, knowledge and social capital acquired during their migration experience. As a man in Golf City (Ghana) explained, this new knowledge and resources can then have further indirect effects on the community:

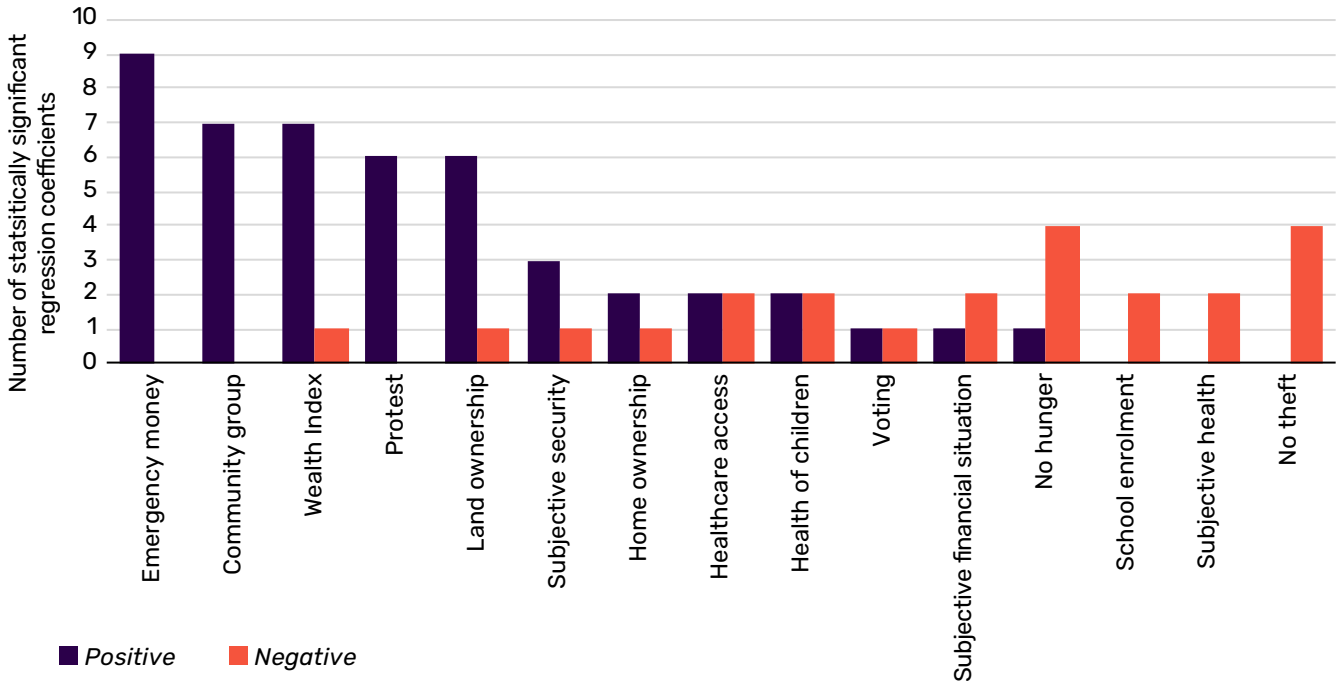
> I also think migration helps the entire community and not just the individual. When we consider e-commerce for instance, when one travels and gets to acquire some knowledge and expertise in this field, he can return and establish his own business and then employ a lot of the youth who do not have anything to do.[84]

Households with a return family member, relative or friends are often also positively affected by this return. Indeed, as shown in Figure 17, of the 15 outcomes included in regression analysis, for most we find more positive associations with knowing a return migrant than negative ones.[85]

For example, return is positively associated with higher levels of wealth and land ownership. Most striking is that in nine research areas there is a positive association between knowing a return migrant and being able to access money in an emergency.[86] This might be due to the social capital and larger networks that return migrants may have that can provide support in difficult times.

83 Batista et al. (2012); Gibson and McKenzie (2012).
84 Focus group GHA2B.
85 Based on regression analysis in Marchand et al. (2023).
86 The dependent variable in this regression is survey item I9, which asks respondents about the household's ability to obtain emergency money within a week if needed. This can be seen as a measure of social capital, as it captures a person's network whom they can count on during hard times.

Figure 17. Associations between return migration and well-being outcomes across research areas



Note: Based on coefficients from regressions run separately for each research area.

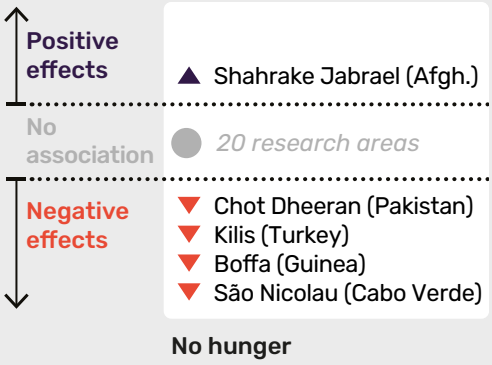
Data source: Regression analyses in Marchand et al. (2023).

Community conditions mediate the effects of returns

As shown in Figure 17, the associations of return migration are consistent for a few well-being outcomes. But for most outcomes, there are diverging effects across research areas. In some areas, and for some outcomes, the effects of return migration are positive, while in others they are negative. Most often, however, we see no effect at all.

Where there is no association between well-being outcomes and return, this may because return is not large enough in a specific research area to have a significant impact of well-being. When associations are negative, this could relate to who is returning and under what conditions, as discussed in the next section.

The effect of return on hunger is divergent across research areas



Source: Based on regression analysis in Marchand et al. (2023).

Local level-factors matter as well. For example, in Chot Dheeran (Pakistan) we see a negative association between the outcome 'no hunger', an indicator of poverty, and return migration. As explained in Chapter 3, the different facets of migration have divergent effects in the village. On the one hand they support local development and livelihoods, for example the building of migrant-funded houses provides work for the construction sector. However, there is concern that little redistribution of profits has reinforced socioeconomic inequality in the area.[87] With (return) migration being associated with higher wealth and inequality, this means that poor people's well-being may barely improve or may potentially deteriorate.

So, depending on the socioeconomic conditions in a community, return migration can play out in positive or negative ways. Theoretically speaking, out-migration may have a negative effect on a community of origin if the labour force is depleted of its most productive or highly skilled members. The return of these people to the local labour force would therefore be a positive thing. But in other research areas the absence of people may release pressure on the local labour market[88] and returnees may therefore represent a strain. This was explained by a woman in Kombolcha (Ethiopia):

> 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.[89]

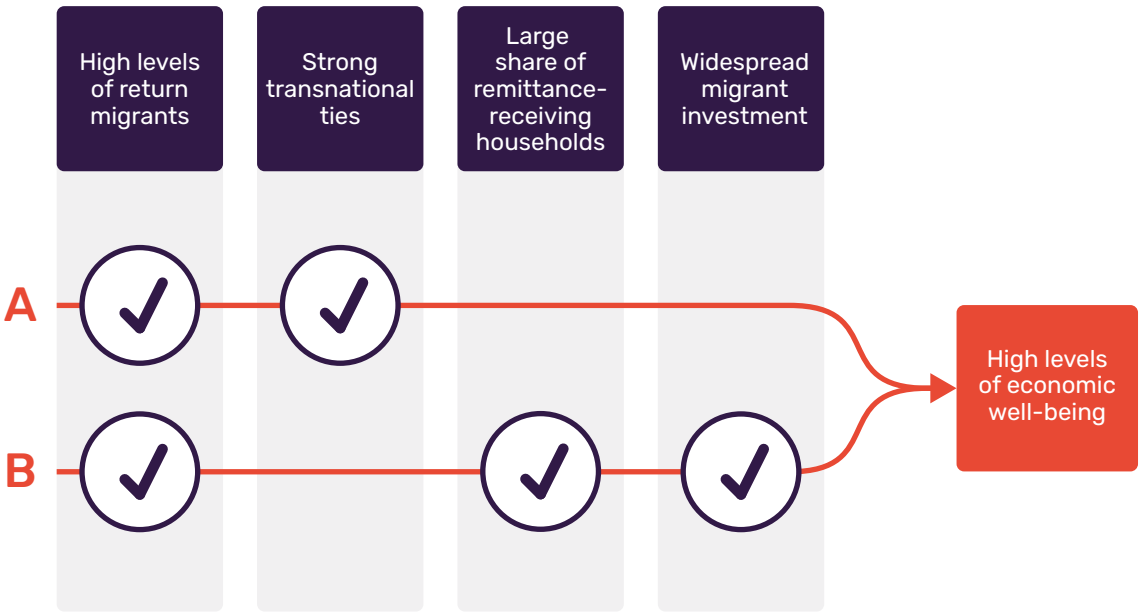
The development potential of return migrants is therefore heavily influenced by the economic, social and institutional conditions in their origin communities.

However, other migration-related factors matter too. At the research area level, we find two separate combinations of factors that can each contribute to high levels of well-being (see Figure 18).[90] On the one hand, having high levels of return migrants in the community coupled with strong transnational ties is conducive for high levels of economic well-being. On the other hand, this

87 Erdal et al. (2022).
88 OECD (2017).
89 Focus group ETH1A.
90 Based on QCA results in Weisner and Czaika (2024).

outcome can also be achieved by having a high level of return migrants together with a large share of remittance-receiving households and widespread migrant investment in the community.

Figure 18. Pathways for high levels of economic well-being involving return migration



Note: For the measurement and definition of each factor see Weisner and Czaika (2024).

Source: QCA results in Weisner and Czaika (2024).

We thus find that it is not just the number of return migrants that matters, but that their return needs to be coupled with either strong social ties or strong financial flows back to a community for it to have a positive effect on levels of economic well-being in an area. And that makes sense, because it is likely not just the physical return of community members that is important – most people likely realise the positive potential of return migrants on a community when they also have access to ideas, networks and economic capital.

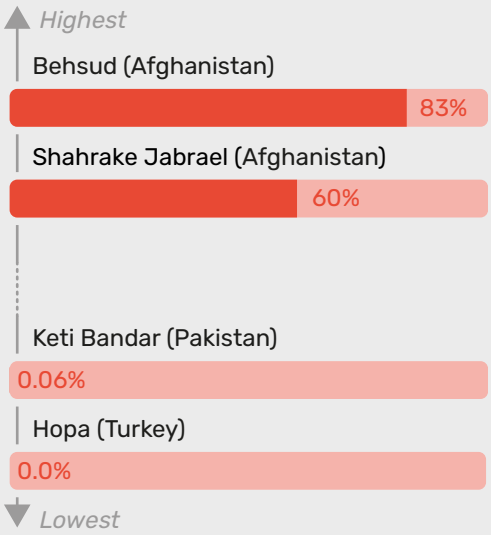
"We thus find that it is not just the number of return migrants that matters, but that their return needs to be coupled with either strong social ties or strong financial flows back to a community for it to have a positive effect on levels of economic well-being in an area."

Forced returns represent risks to development

While we see that return can lead to positive development outcomes, the type and conditions of return matter as well. For example, the prevalence of forced returns and deportations is much higher in some research areas than in others. However, return that is chosen and prepared for is much more likely to lead to positive outcomes. In these circumstances, voluntary returnees may be more willing and able to contribute to development and may be less reliant on family and community resources.[91]

When comparing research areas, we find four different, but equally relevant, combinations of conditions surrounding return migration that can contribute to high levels of economic well-being (see Figure 19). In particular, the analysis shows the critical role of return not being forced (i.e., deportations).[92] [93] Three out of the four pathways show that not having prevalent deportations to an area is important for positive outcomes. Low levels of forced return are therefore key, in combination with other factors, for higher levels of economic well-being. This finding supports the claims in the return literature that emphasise the positive effect of voluntary return migration on communities of origin, as opposed to forced returns.[94]

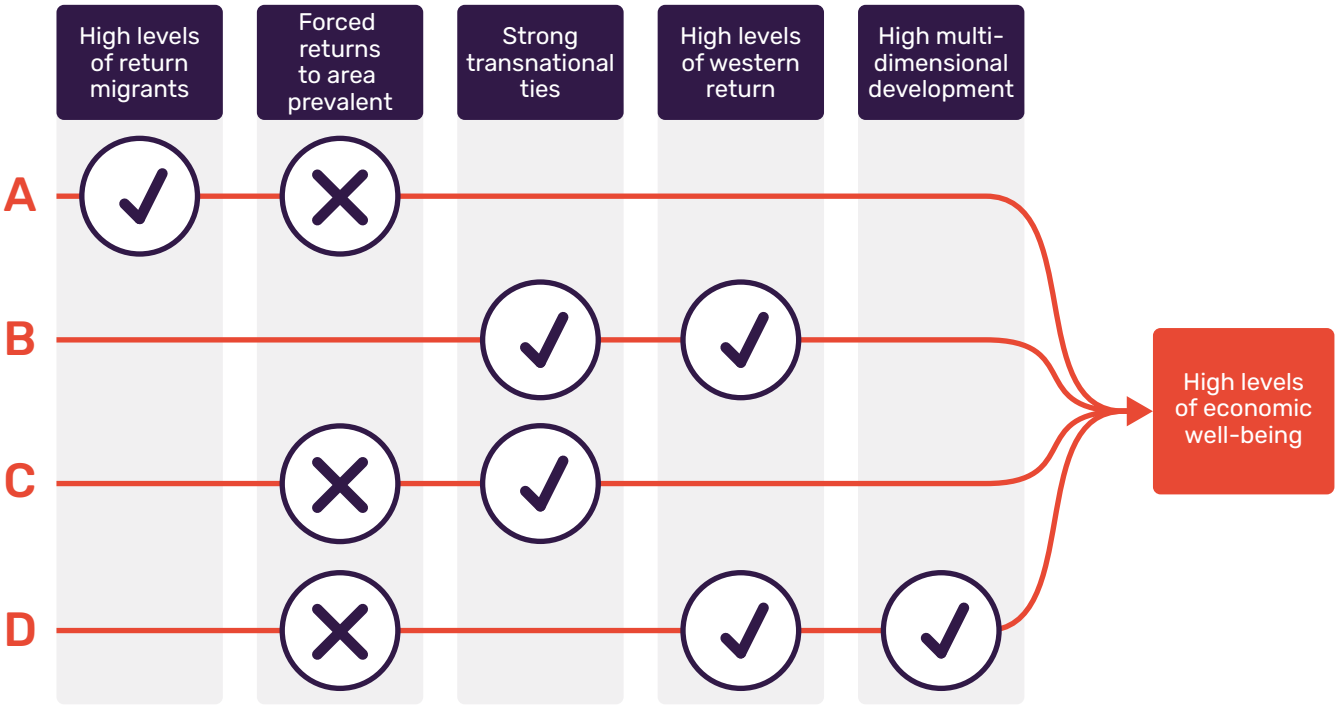
There is great variation in the share of people who know someone who has died in the attempt to migrate



Source: MIGNEX survey (restricted variant, v1)

91 See Cassarino (2015). However, the length of time abroad matters as well, as those who have spent a longer time abroad can may be able to bring more financial resources than those deported immediately after arrival. See also Newland and Salant (2018) and Cassarino (2014).
92 QCA results in Weisner and Czaika (2024).
93 Based on MIGNEX survey item G10 (which asks if a person has been deported from abroad and forced to come back to [COUNTRY]').
94 Cassarino (2015).

Figure 19. Pathways for high levels of economic well-being, involving voluntary not forced return migration



Note: For the measurement and definition of each factor see Weisner and Czaika (2024).

Source: QCA results in Weisner and Czaika (2024).

Only pathway B does not include the absence of forced returns. In this pathway, the return migration from western countries is particularly noteworthy. It may coincide with favourable economic conditions in the origin countries, as people are more likely to return if there is a positive environment there. For example, return from the west occurs in the research areas in Turkey and Cabo Verde, which are among those areas with the lowest poverty levels. We find that this form of return also interacts with strong transnational ties that may facilitate reintegration and economic success upon return, as further explained in Chapter 4.

Redeyef (Tunisia) is unique in relation to this combination of conditions. Here, out-migration is common and transnational ties are strong with historical destinations like France and Germany. People keep in close contact with friends and family who have migrated, and a quarter of young adults (24%) in Redeyef have family, relatives or friends who have returned from abroad. The phenomenon of return migration manifests in various ways within the community. Some former residents return permanently, while others make

short-term visits, contributing to a seasonal population increase and stimulation of the local economy during the summer months (see Chapter 1).[95]

Implications of the proposed solidarity mechanism on the EU returns system
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Forced returns can have negative consequences for several reasons. In some cases, deportations include people who have mental health concerns, having been traumatised before their migration, in transit and/or in the destination.[96] Additionally, evidence from Latin America shows that sometimes criminals may be deported back to their countries of origin, which can lead to increasing security threats in an area of return.[97] Similarly, having population increases in areas that already have poor living standards and few economic opportunities can lead to more crime. A woman in Shahrake Jabrael (Afghanistan) said:

> 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.[98]

As highlighted for Behsud (Afghanistan), the extent of forced return and destination country policies – such as in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum of the European Union (EU)[99] – therefore also impact development processes and security situations in countries of origin.

Behsud, Afghanistan

Most residents of Behsud are returnees from neighbouring countries or are deported from Turkey. It has a large number of returnees who congregate in the poorest areas. Almost every family in Behsud has members who have migrated to destinations such as Europe, the United States, Turkey and Arab countries. Most people who migrate do not plan to come back. However, they often return as they have migrated irregularly. While doing so, they face numerous challenges, including being stranded in a transit country, arrested by the border police or deported by the host country. When they return to their origin community, they often see no opportunity to reintegrate into society, which results in negative outcomes for themselves and other community members and often leads to a subsequent migration attempt.

Source: Akakhil et al. (2022).

95 Kasavan et al. (2022).
96 van Houte (2019); van Houte and Davids (2018); Werthern et al. (2018).
97 Rozo et al. (2021).
98 Focus group AFG1A.
99 European Commission (2020).

Policy implications

On the whole, the effects of migration are more positive than negative for households and communities of origin. Yet, it is important to recognise the multifaceted effects of migration – it is not a silver bullet to reduce poverty and the effects of migration vary, depending on the broader socioeconomic environment and policy framework. Hence, it is important to put policies in place that enhance the positive effects of migration while mitigating the negative effects, in both the country of origin as well as the country of destination.

Remittances tend to be one of the most beneficial aspects of migration for those who stay back. Therefore, continued efforts are needed to strengthen migrants' ability to send remittances via more effective channels with low transaction costs. This means building on already agreed international targets, such as in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Migration (GCM).[100] It is also critical to help migrants integrate in countries of destination and to give them access to rights that put migrants in a better position to be able to send remittances.[101]

For their part, origin countries should establish policies that enhance the impact of remittances. For instance, MIGNEX research shows that – if the environment is right – migrants are willing to invest in infrastructure, businesses or growing sectors such as tourism. There are a diverse set of tools available to countries of origin to facilitate such diaspora financing.[102]

100 See GCM, Objective 20: Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants (UN, 2019); and SDG 10.c, which commits, by 2030, to reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5% (UNDESA, n.d.).

101 For example, the 2030 Agenda and SDG Target 8.8 advocate for universal labour protection, including for migrants (UNDESA, n.d.).

102 Gelb et al. (2021).

But remittances do not always have these positive effects. At times they can exacerbate existing economic and social inequalities. Consequently, policies that aim to enhance the impact of remittances should be complemented by policies that seek to reduce inequalities.[103]

While financial remittances are very much on the radar of policy-makers, less visible social remittances are just as important. Social remittances can, for instance, make gender attitudes in origin communities less conservative, thereby contributing to key EU development priorities towards gender equality.[104]

For such ideas, knowledge and new skills to be shared, frequent exchange is critical. As such, both destination and origin countries should focus on enabling more circularity and communication between migrants and their origin communities and families.

Beyond remittance-related policy, the return policies of countries of destination also play a central role in shaping the impact of migration. Deportations, and forced or coerced return are unlikely to lead to positive development outcomes in the communities that migrants are returning to. While deportation may be important to destination countries for other reasons, such as domestic politics, such policies should not be whitewashed as benefiting origin countries. This also means that using money earmarked for development to forcibly or coercively send people back represents a misuse of development funds, as noted in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) criteria on the eligibility of migration-related funding for official development assistance (ODA).[105]

Indeed, return migration has more positive impacts on development in origin areas when it is voluntary. To support this, countries of origin can implement policies aimed at attracting and reintegrating migrants,[106] which can significantly

103 Weisner and Czaika (2024).
104 As exemplified in the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III) (EU, 2020), the 85% gender equality target in NDICI-Global Europe (EU, 2022), and SDG 5 (UNDESA, n.d.).
105 OECD (2023). See also Weisner and Pope (2023).
106 See examples for Pakistan in Qaisrani et al. (2022). Reviews of migration-relevant policies in other MIGNEX countries are available at mignex.org/publications.

enhance the contributions of returnees to development efforts. Simultaneously, destination countries can promote planned for and sustainable returns, which includes reintegration support.

Finally, migration can have the largest positive multiplier effect when it occurs in an environment that can absorb and convert possible positive benefits, like financial and social remittances, as well as diaspora investments. Therefore, any development policies that enhance the broad economic conditions in an origin area are also likely to result in positive effects from migration. This is a key policy priority, in its own right, which has the secondary benefit of also maximising the positive benefits of migration.

Concluding remarks

Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon. Its effects on communities cannot be neatly compartmentalised into a singular narrative. As such, understanding the balance between positive and negative outcomes necessitates a nuanced approach.

MIGNEX research highlights that analyses spanning multiple research areas can provide better insights into the complex development implications of migration. Through such efforts, we have underlined the interconnected nature of individual well-being and community development.

Migration has a consistently positive association on a number of well-being and development outcomes. These include wealth, land ownership, community participation and the ability to acquire money in an emergency.

And beyond the impacts on migrants and their families, migration exerts diverse effects at the community level too. However, these effects are less well understood. They can be positive and negative, and they can result in changes in demographic, economic and social community dynamics.

We know that social remittances – for instance the new knowledge, ideas, practices, skills and social capital migrants share – can cultivate development in origin communities. They can also transform societal norms and values, and hence affect development indirectly.

And while MIGNEX research largely supports the commonly held view that return migration has positive effects on development, we show that this is not true across the board. Return migration is most likely to have positive development effects on communities of origin if it is voluntary rather than forced.

Finally, we show that the effects of migration are divergent. Most effects do not operate in isolation; rather, they interact with other structural elements or policies to shape the development outcomes of migration. However, different combinations of migration-related aspects can lead to the same outcome.

Migration represents an important lifeline for individuals and their families. Under the right conditions and with effective policies in place, migration could lead to even greater developmental impacts across communities of origin.

Publications and data

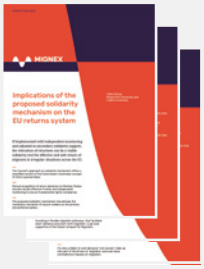
MIGNEX research is documented through more than 80 publications across five types within the MIGNEX series. In addition, analyses are further developed as articles in peer-reviewed journals. The range of formats ensure that insights are available to diverse audiences, including policy makers, practitioners, students, and researchers.

Project publications are available at mignex.org/publications.

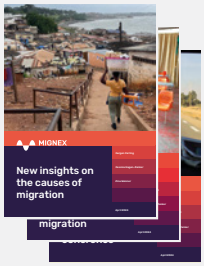
14 MIGNEX Handbook Chapters contain foundations, procedures and documentation of the research process and the data that have been collected

26 MIGNEX Case Study Briefs present migration and development dynamics in each of the 26 research areas

29 MIGNEX Background Papers contain development of methods, reviews of migration-related policies and empirical analyses across a range of research questions



10 MIGNEX Policy Briefs highlight selected findings and point out their relevance for policy on migration and development



3 MIGNEX Reports synthesize selected insights from across the more specific and technical analyses

Journal articles based on MIGNEX research contain analyses further developed for peer reviewed journals

Raw data from the survey, focus group discussions and policy reviews will be available for secondary analyses when the project ends. The data have been anonymized to ensure the confidentiality of research participants.

Data and documentation are available at zenodo.org/communities/mignex.

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