

Benefits of migration for developing countries of origin

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Question

What are the positive benefits of migration for developing countries of origin? Focus is on socio-economic benefits (e.g. human capital, skills, expertise, spread of norms) that occur in countries of origin from medium to long term migration.

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1. Summary

An international emigrant is considered to be a 'person who changes his or her country of usual residence and has lived outside of this country for at least three months' (OECD, 2017a, 212). Migrants can be considered to be diaspora if they retain strong links to the home country and its population, and to members of the same national group who have migrated to other host countries (see Haider, 2014).

'Brain drain' refers to the traditional view that the migration of skilled professionals is a zero-sum game whereby the host country¹ receives a net inflow of human capital from the home country,² improving the competitiveness of the host country at the home country's expense (Shin & Moon, 2018). There has been growing recognition that there can be mutually beneficial ties between home and host countries that create a positive-sum, win-win situation for both sides – referred to as 'brain circulation' (Shin & Moon, 2018; Saxenian, 2006; cited in Gaillard et al., 2015; Benedict & Ukpere, 2013). Converting brain drain into brain circulation or brain linkage can benefit the social and economic development of the home country (Shin & Moon, 2018).

A complementary framework for exploring the channels through which emigrants can benefit their home country is the 'absence' – 'prospect' – 'diaspora' – 'return' model (Li and McHale, 2006; cited in Chauvet & Mercier, 2014). The latter three channels – the prospect of migration; diaspora contributions while living abroad, and return migration – will be explored in this report. There is, however, limited research available on the prospect channel.

The benefits of monetary remittances to developing countries are well established. This report focuses more on benefits of migration to the country of origin in relation to human capital, skills and knowledge transfer, and the transmission of ideas, norms and practices. While relying on studies from around the world in varying sectors, the report draws in large part on research on Africa and highlights specific research from the health sector. While there are various case studies on potential benefits that can be gained from diaspora contributions and return migration, there is a lack of systematic evidence, which is noted in the literature (Li et al., 2017). There is also limited empirical evidence to confirm the impact of the transmission of norms and practices as these effects can be difficult to capture (Chauvet et al., 2016).

Economic benefits

- **Diaspora channel:** There is much research on the importance of financial remittances to developing countries and as a source of income for many households in these countries (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020; Lacroix et al., 2016; Siddique et al., 2016). Remittance-receiving households are more likely to own businesses, real estate or agricultural assets than non-remittance-receiving households (OECD, 2017b). Countries of origin also benefit from the money spent by diasporas when they return for their holidays (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020).
- **Return channel:** There is growing global evidence which finds that return migrants are more likely than non-migrants to be self-employed in business or to start a new enterprise (see Naudé et al., 2017). This is due in part to migrants accumulating savings and human capital resources while working in the host country that are used to invest in business (see Naudé et al., 2017; OECD, 2017c; Mayer et al., 2015). Accumulated knowledge and skills can be

¹ Host country is also referred to as country of destination or receiving country.

² Home country is also referred to as country of origin or sending country.

especially beneficial if returnees can influence the productivity of other workers (Rasamoelison et al., 2021). A study on China finds that return migrants also support entrepreneurship amongst family members (Giulietti et al., 2013; cited in Naudé et al., 2017).

Human capital and knowledge transfer benefits

- **Prospect channel:** The prospect of emigrating can increase the expected return to investing in human capital (incentive effect), evidenced in a recent study showing that students migrating to English-speaking countries increased expected school life in the sending countries (Rasamoelison et al., 2021). If the home country experiences an increase in human capital greater than the loss from actual emigration, it will benefit from an overall positive effect on human capital (Li et al., 2017; Beine et al., 2008). Cross-country research finds that doubling the emigration rate of the highly skilled induces a 5 percent increase in human capital formation in the native population (residents and emigrants) (Beine et al., 2008, 632).
- **Diaspora channel:** The strongest link between remittances and human capital investment is investment in education (OECD, 2017b). Paying for health treatment is also a common use of remittances (OECD, 2017b). Recent research has focused less on remittances and more on brain circulation and linkages (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020). Professional diaspora organisations and online diaspora portals enable diaspora groups and local stakeholders to share ideas on how to pursue sustainable development in the home country (Chand, 2019). Migrants can also transfer knowledge through return visits, temporary work in their countries of origin (e.g. medical sabbaticals), or by working virtually (e.g. telemedicine, educational webinars, distance-learning programmes and research partnerships) (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020; Radwan & Sakr, 2018; Majeed & Saeed, 2017; Benedict & Ukpere, 2013). These linkages could help to alleviate the absence of training in particular sub-speciality subjects in the home country (Majeed & Saeed, 2017).
- **Return channel:** Returning professionals with skills and competencies gained while abroad often create new enterprises, transfer knowledge and increase the human capital stock in the country of origin (Krasniqi & Williams, 2019; OECD, 2017c). Research on the health care sector in Nigeria and Ghana finds that the return of health professionals has had a positive impact on the healthcare system through the spread of health-related knowledge and good practices – and the transfer of a critical mass of skills that would otherwise not be available in medical practice in the home country (Okafor & Chimereze, 2020; Adzei & Sakyi, 2014).

Political and stability benefits

- **Prospect channel:** The prospect of emigration can improve the quality of political institutions in origin countries by giving skilled workers greater political voice and bargaining power vis-à-vis the elite, encouraging the elite to improve institutions and services to retain them (Grečić, 2019; see Li et al., 2017). It can also contribute to stability by dampening civil conflicts caused by natural resource competition and rent-seeking (Issifou, 2017).
- **Diaspora channel:** Diasporas have successfully influenced governance and political processes in their countries of origin, such as through raising awareness, promoting transparency, and funding political campaigns (Rasamoelison et al., 2021; Ivlevs & King, 2017). Migrants can also, without any political agenda, transfer social and institutional norms and practices to their family members in the home country, referred to as ‘social remittances’ (Ivlevs & King, 2017). Research on Latin America finds that respondents who communicate with relatives abroad are more likely than respondents without family abroad to support a pro-active state (Meseguer et al., 2016). A case study of elections in Senegal finds that

migrants' economic power can increase their ability to transfer political ideas and norms and affect electoral outcomes in their home country (Vari-Lavoisier, 2016). Studies looking at the impact of remittances on corruption have produced mixed results (Baudassé et al., 2018). Research on the Western Balkans finds that while receiving monetary remittances may increase the risk of bribe solicitation, this is countered by the beneficial effects created by the transfer of norms and attitudes against corruption (Ivlevs & King, 2017).

- **Return channel:** Returnees can be a source of supply and demand for better quality institutions (Li et al., 2017). Leaders who studied abroad may have benefited from higher quality training and developed a higher preference for democracy (Mercier, 2016). A study on the impact of the migration experience in Cape Verde finds that return migrants can increase the demand for political accountability in their home countries (Batista & Vincente, 2011). The presence of return migrants tends to increase the electoral participation of non-migrants and to alter electoral behaviour within communities (Chauvet and Mercier, 2014; OECD, 2017c).

Social benefits

- **Diaspora channel:** Receiving remittances can be positively associated with financial security and improvements in objective well-being (e.g. access to food, water and education). This has the potential to alleviate to some degree, although not fully, declines in subjective well-being (e.g. stress and depression from separation and disruption to family life) (Ivlevs et al., 2019). Having close contacts abroad is positively associated with civic engagement in the country of origin, as in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, stemming from receipt of social and financial remittances (Nikolova et al., 2017). Diasporas have also engaged directly in the strengthening of civil society organisations in their home country not only to enhance the capacities and structures of civil society networks, but also to instil in local communities a civic-mindedness and to build social capital (Haider, 2014).

2. Migration frameworks

There is much research that documents higher migration rates among the highly educated, from low-income to high-income countries (Rasamoelison et al., 2021; OECD, 2017a). It is estimated that sub-Saharan Africa has already lost one-third of its human capital through migration (IOM data, cited in Chand, 2019, 7). Emigration can also generate greater loss of human capital and skills shortages in particular sectors and occupations, for example, the health sector (OECD, 2017a). Shortages in health care workers worldwide are projected to increase from 7.2 million in 2013 to 12.9 million by 2035 – with the poorest countries worst affected (OECD, 2017a, 216).

Policies that focus on reversing 'brain drain' through return migration are premised on the view that emigration produces primarily losses for the countries of origin. In recent years, however, there has been **growing recognition that there can be mutually beneficial ties between home and host countries** – referred to as '**brain circulation**' (Shin & Moon, 2018; Saxenian, 2006; cited in Gaillard et al., 2015; Benedict & Ukpere, 2013). It involves emigrants consistently engaging with the home country in a variety of ways that does not require permanent return (Chand, 2019). This could involve, for example, migrants providing businesses in the home and host countries with access to transnational social networks, running professional network organisations, and transmitting ideas and practices to the home country (Chand, 2019). 'Brain linkages' is a related concept that involves migrants engaging with their home countries through business visits or short-term stays, or knowledge transfer through electronic communications, such as through virtual work (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020; Shin & Moon, 2018).

Brain circulation can also include permanent return, whereby migrants return to their home country with educational or work experience obtained abroad that can contribute to its development (Shin & Moon, 2018). There is to date no systematic and representative large-scale data collection on return migration (OECD, 2017c). Data from the OECD and EU's Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development (IPPMD) project, collected during 2013-2017, reveals that over 40 percent of all return migrants to the countries of study³ spent less than a year in their destination countries before returning home. Return patterns differing significantly across the countries of study (OECD, 2017c, 247).

If brain drain can be converted into brain circulation or brain linkage, it could contribute to the social and economic development of the home country in ways that home-grown talent alone may not be able to achieve (Shin & Moon, 2018). In Senegal, for example, migration policy is premised on a notion of return that focuses on attracting migrants' resources and skills rather than on the return of migrants themselves (Sinatti, 2015). The view is that mobility, knowledge transfer and remittances can support new investments in the home country (Sinatti, 2015).

A complementary framework for exploring the channels through which migrants can affect the quality of institutions and development in their home country is the 'absence' – 'prospect' – 'diaspora' – 'return' model (Li and McHale, 2006; cited in Chauvet & Mercier, 2014):

- The **'absence' channel**: skilled emigration removes the most productive individuals from the country, who are also more likely to advocate for good governance;
- The **'prospect' channel**: the possibility of emigration offers the most productive individuals more bargaining power vis-à-vis elites;
- The **'diaspora' channel**: emigrants can support political groups or social movements from abroad;
- The **'return' channel**: returnees come back with new ideas and are likely to promote specific political objectives, such as government accountability.

While outlined here in terms of effects on political institutions (see Chauvet & Mercier, 2014), this framework can also be used to examine socio-economic impacts – as will be done in this report, focusing on prospect-diaspora-return channels.

3. Economic benefits

While the **loss of labour can** be detrimental for some economies, it can in certain cases **relieve pressure on an over-crowded market** (OECD, 2017a). Data from the IPPMD project reveals that the rate of employment among emigrants prior to leaving is higher than for non-migrants. This provides the potential for those staying who were unemployed to gain employment (OECD, 2017a). Within the agricultural sector, which tends to be overstocked with underemployed workers, emigration can also relieve pressure in the sector. There is also evidence that households with emigrants are more likely to hire workers from outside of the household, thus creating employment for others (OECD, 2017a).

³ This large and empirically based project is being conducted in ten developing countries with significant emigration or immigration rates – Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, Haiti, Morocco and the Philippines.

Diaspora channel

There is abundant research that points to migrants' **financial remittances as a crucial source of funding for countries with large emigration rates**, and a key source of income for many households in developing countries (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020; Lacroix et al., 2016; Siddique et al., 2016). They represent a key example of the diaspora communities' emotional ties and connections to the home country, and their desire to benefit its development (see Krasniqi & Williams, 2019). The volume of remittances to low and middle-income countries is estimated to have reached USD 432 billion in 2015, over three times the official development assistance received by these countries (Ratha et al., 2016). The Report from African Economic Outlook (2013) demonstrates that between 5-20 percent of Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is derived from remittances (Okafor & Chimereze, 2020, 18).

Remittances can improve macroeconomic stability in countries of origin, reduce poverty rates by enabling households to meet consumption needs, and facilitate human capital formation by allowing for higher expenditure on education and health, removing credit constraints and supporting entrepreneurial activity (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020; Krasniqi & Williams, 2019; OECD, 2017b).

Remittance-receiving households are more likely to own businesses, real estate or agricultural assets than non-remittance-receiving households (OECD, 2017b). The IPPMD research finds a link between remittances and business ownership solely in urban areas (OECD, 2017b). Poorer households also need to use remittances for consumption, leaving little for productive investment (Krasniqi & Williams, 2019; OECD, 2017b). There is also variation across countries. Case studies of the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and the Philippines find that remittances do not have a significant effect on, or even reduce, the likelihood of owning a business (see Naudé et al., 2017). Case studies of Mexico find instead that remittances are a significant source of capital for microenterprises, with remittance receiving households and communities more likely to invest in businesses (see Naudé et al., 2017).

The institutional environment plays a role in whether remittances support and encourage more productive forms of investment (Krasniqi & Williams, 2019). Research indicates that the contribution of remittances to economic growth is stronger where financial markets are weaker – as they can be used to overcome credit and liquidity constraints (see Naudé et al., 2017). A stable remittance income can also improve the creditworthiness of a household, allowing it to access loans (Naudé et al., 2017). Further, in environments with frequent changes in laws and regulations, the ensuing uncertainty means that entrepreneurs are less able to plan for the future and less likely to invest in growth activities (Krasniqi & Williams, 2019).

In addition to remittances, **countries of origin benefit from the money spent by diasporas when they return for their holidays**. This can provide an important source of revenue, contributing to the home country's development (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020).

Return channel

There is growing evidence from around the world which finds that **return migrants are more likely than non-migrants to be self-employed in business or to start a new enterprise** (see Naudé et al., 2017). The IPPMD research finds, for example, that return migrants in partner countries are more likely than non-migrants to become self-employed (OECD, 2017c). Studies on Egypt and Mozambique find, however, that a migrant's decision to return could coincide with

the decision to become an entrepreneur, which can create an upward bias in the propensity of return migrants engaged in entrepreneurship (Wahba & Zenou, 2012 and Batista et al., 2014; cited in Naudé et al., 2017).

This difference in levels of entrepreneurship between migrants and non-migrants is due in part to migrants **accumulating savings and gaining human capital resources (education, training and skills) in the host country** that are used to invest in business (see Naudé et al., 2017; OECD, 2017c; Mayer et al., 2015). Even in the case of low-skilled returnees, diaspora gather unique experience and learning, including in relation to language, culture, values, technology, markets and institutions (Mayer et al., 2015).

A study on China finds that not only are return migrants more likely than non-migrants to start a new business, but that they **also encourage and support entrepreneurship amongst family members who did not migrate** (Giulietti et al., 2013; cited in Naudé et al., 2017). The knowledge and skills acquired by returnees can be **especially beneficial if they can influence the productivity of other workers** (Rasamoelison et al., 2021). Research on an entrepreneur who returned to Ghana from Germany, for example, finds that the returnee trained his local employees to be punctual and to produce high-quality products – cultural values and knowledge that he acquired in Germany, which contributed to the success of the business in the home country (Mayer et al., 2015).

Diaspora networks can also benefit returnee entrepreneurs through access to new information and knowledge; and potential customers and suppliers in the host countries (Mayer et al., 2015). The impact on the economy through job creation, however, depends largely on whether these businesses also employ other people (OECD, 2017c). Most of the businesses surveyed in IPPMD partner countries tend to only employ family members or close relatives (OECD, 2017c).

4. Human capital and knowledge transfer benefits

Prospect channel

The emigration of highly skilled individuals can be partly compensated if those who stay have more incentives to upgrade their skills (OECD, 2017a). The premise is that having **the prospect of emigrating can increase the expected return to investing in human capital (incentive effect)** (Rasamoelison et al., 2021). This occurs, for example, when residents of low-income countries observe the migration of bright students to foreign universities, which motivates them to improve their educational performance in their home countries (Rasamoelison et al., 2021). As plans to emigrate may be uncertain, many individuals with improved skills end up staying in the home country (OECD, 2017a). It is thus possible that easier access to emigration could raise the country's remaining human capital (Rasamoelison et al., 2021; OECD, 2017a). **Should human capital increases outweigh the loss from actual emigration, there would be an overall positive effect on human capital in the country of origin** (Li et al., 2017; Beine et al., 2008).

Research on changes in domestic human capital stemming from prospective and actual migration, based on data from 127 countries, finds that **doubling the emigration rate of the highly skilled induces a 5 percent increase in human capital formation among the native population** (residents and emigrants together) (Beine et al., 2008, 632). A more recent study finds that a **10 percent increase in the number of students going to English-speaking countries leads to a 0.71 percent increase in expected school life in the sending countries**

on average (Rasamoelison et al., 2021, 12). Thus, at the sample average of 11.71 years of expected school life, doubling the number of students going to English-speaking developed countries extends expected school life by almost 10 months or an entire academic year (Rasamoelison et al., 2021, 12). The study also finds that a 10 percent increase in the number of these emigrants is associated on average with a 0.25 percent increase in real per capita GDP (Rasamoelison et al., 2021, 12-13). These positive associations are less strong, however, when relying on upper secondary net enrolment rates as a measure of changes in the human capital stock (Rasamoelison et al., 2021). In addition, the incentive effect does not apply in the case of students migrating to French-speaking countries (Rasamoelison et al., 2021).

Research on China finds that the impact of emigration on human capital accumulation in sending regions depends on the type of emigration (temporary vs. permanent) and the educational attainment of the emigrants (Ha et al., 2016). Permanent emigration improves enrolment in both middle and high schools, whereas temporary emigration has a significantly positive effect only on middle school enrolment (Ha et al., 2016). Different educational attainments also have varying effects on school enrolments: the share of temporary emigrants with high school education positively affects middle school enrolment, while the share of temporary emigrants with middle school education negatively affects high school enrolment (Ha et al., 2016).

In the case of the health care sector, the **success of migrating health professionals could inspire future cohorts to become doctors and nurses** (OECD, 2017a). In the Philippines, emigration has produced a demand for upgrading vocational skills, especially nursing, which in turn has resulted in a growing number of nursing colleges and graduates (see OECD, 2017a).⁴ The prospects of emigration may have thus increased the number of nurses in the home country, although there are no studies that have investigated this possible outcome (OECD, 2017a).

Research on the prospective channel also needs to address changes in the overall mix of human capital investments. For example, a **strong prospect of emigration could incentivise young people to invest in skills that are internationally marketable** and transferable, such as software development skills, rather than skills relevant to particular public sector institutions (Li et al., 2017). As such, even the prospect of emigration could **lessen a country's supply of talented institution builders** (Li et al., 2017).

Diaspora channel

The **strongest link between remittances and human capital investment seems to be investment in education** – often sending children to private schools (OECD, 2017b). IPPMD research finds that remittances are linked to higher household expenditures on education and that remittance-receiving households are more likely to have children in private schools than households without remittances (OECD, 2017b). Remittances are not, however, linked to higher school attendance in most partner countries, with the exceptions of Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, which have the lowest primary school enrolment rates in the sample (OECD, 2017b). The research also finds that paying for **health treatment is a fairly common use of remittances** (OECD, 2017b). In Armenia, Georgia and Morocco, for example, households that receive remittances are more likely to visit health clinics, an indication that receiving remittances helps relieve household financial constraints (OECD, 2017b).

⁴ By 2006, there were about 460 nursing colleges in the Philippines – up from 170 in 1990 – with a total of 20 000 nurses graduating each year (Esposito-Ramirez, 2001; Lorenzo et al., 2007) (OECD, 2017a).

Diaspora can also improve the health and quality of life for residents in the home country outside of remittances. It is common for Nigerian diaspora, for example, to invite their parents and relatives for medical check-ups and treatment abroad (Okafor & Chimereze, 2020). Others send drugs or money for medical treatment in Nigeria, thereby improving the health of Nigerians (Okafor & Chimereze, 2020).

Brain circulation and linkages – knowledge transfer

Countries of origin can gain from migrants' knowledge, not only after their return, but while they are living in the receiving country (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020). **Recent research has focused less on remittances and more on brain circulation and knowledge transfer** (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020).

Networks and collaboration: Professional diaspora organisations, in conjunction with local stakeholder groups, can help to gather expertise, ideas, and financial capital that can help to build institutional capacity in the country of origin (Chand, 2019). Online diaspora portals are a cost-efficient mechanism to **enable diaspora groups and local stakeholders to share ideas on how to pursue sustainable development in the home country** (Chand, 2019). It can also be a useful database of skilled human capital in the diaspora (Chand, 2019). Certain sectors, such as science and technology, require such portals and official internet sites where all skilled nationals from home and host countries can meet, exchange, and potentially cooperate (Gaillard et al., 2015). This can have a stronger mitigating effect on the consequences of brain drain than efforts to slow the rate of brain drain (Radwan & Sakr, 2018).

Migrants have been found to have a positive and statistically significant relationship with technology development in the home country (see Radwan & Sakr, 2018). Research on the African diaspora finds that fostering collaborations with the home country could contribute to **knowledge transfer and technology flows** through **bilateral training programmes, joint postgraduate degrees, distance-learning programmes and research partnerships** (Radwan & Sakr, 2018). To date, however, there are few programmes and political instruments that encourage such collaboration (Radwan & Sakr, 2018).

The South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA) network was launched in the 1990s with the aim of turning brain drain into an intellectual gain (Benedict & Ukpere, 2013). It sought to benefit from the diaspora, many of whom had indicated a desire to contribute to the then new South Africa (Kahn, 2015). A concerted e-mail campaign elicited positive responses from some 2,800 of these non-resident professionals, including prominent business persons and scientists, some of whom offered lecture tours and formed networks (Kahn, 2015). SANSA has since ceased to exist, however, likely due to lack of funding (Gaillard et al., 2015; Kahn, 2015). Another initiative is 'SABLE' or SA Business Links to Experts⁵ - a knowledge network of highly-qualified South Africans living around the world who aim to provide mentoring and consulting services to entrepreneurs, companies, universities and other institutions in South Africa (Kahn, 2015).

Other strategies and mechanisms to draw on the accumulated expertise of African experts in the diaspora include the Egyptian programme of 'joint collaborative efforts between Egyptian scholars abroad and research institutions in Egypt'. It aims to develop strong ties between migrants and their home country, particularly through grants to Egyptian organisations to

⁵ www.sablenetwork.com

collaborate with Egyptian experts in Europe to tackle local challenges (Radwan & Sakr, 2018). Collaborative research projects between African and non-African research institutions could have multipurpose benefits, with the advancement of research capabilities and the flow of knowledge and expertise leading to the retention of scholars in home institutions (Radwan & Sakr, 2018).

The Moroccan government has also created a programme to build a forum through which Moroccan experts living abroad can participate in addressing the needs of the home country (Radwan & Sakr, 2018; Gaillard & Gaillard, 2015). Several agreements with relevant networks in France, Germany, Canada and the U.S. have been established under this programme (Radwan & Sakr, 2018). Theme-specific networks in the medical field have also been created involving Moroccan migrants (Compétences Médicale Marocaines du Monde) (Gaillard & Gaillard, 2015) and Ghanaian migrants (the Ghana Physicians and Surgeons Foundation of North America), who have an interest in the health care of the home countries (Chand, 2019). The Ghanaian network also supports numerous non-profit health initiatives in Ghana (Chand, 2019).

Research on these networks finds that the two main prerequisites for effectiveness are a sound governance structure and a dynamic strategy that facilitates interconnections with knowledge actors and knowledge exchange (Radwan & Sakr, 2018). They could evolve from the development of regional networks among the different African regions, followed by strong links and ties with non-African counterparts (Radwan & Sakr, 2018). At the international level, programmes such as the UNDP's Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) are considered well-structured to help in establishing collaborative links. The programme, which started in the late 1980s in many African countries, facilitates short-term technical assistance through expatriates (Radwan & Sakr, 2018).

Return visits and temporary in-person work: Migrants can also **transfer knowledge through return visits and temporary work** in their countries of origin. In the health care sector, for example, doctors and nurses could work in their countries of origin for several weeks or a few months; and medical professors could **spend their sabbatical years or summers in African medical schools**, training future doctors, conducting research with their local counterparts, or providing health care services in state-run clinics and hospitals (Benedict & Ukpere, 2013). In order for this to take place, however, migrants must feel secure in their ability to return to their previous positions once their temporary contract is completed (Benedict & Ukpere, 2013).

A specific example of a short-term diaspora engagement project is the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Programme (CADFP), involving collaboration between American and African higher education institutions and educational projects at African institutions (Chand, 2019). Another example is the African Partners Medical Group, which involves a group of African doctors and nurses in North America and Europe who sponsor annual educational workshops around Africa (Chand, 2019). The workshops provide local physicians, nurses, and other supporting staff the opportunity to acquire new skills in a small group setting (Chand, 2019).

Virtual work: Diaspora engagement in virtual work for their countries of origin could also be a means of knowledge transfer and human capital gain for these countries (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020). Research on migrants from Lithuania confirms that **virtual work is a potentially productive way of utilising migrants' human capital for the benefit of the country of origin** (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020). The study reveals that 51.9 percent of the respondents demonstrated the intention to work virtually for their country of origin, with consulting, editing and translation highlighted as the most possible types of virtual work

(Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020). Earning extra money and emotional attachment to the home country are their key sources of motivation (Kumpikaite-Valiuniene & Duobiene, 2020).

In the health care sector, research finds that the migration of medical professionals from developing countries (e.g. India, Pakistan, Iran, China and Nigeria) to high-income countries for residency training can be useful for the home country if **migrant physicians contribute services via telemedicine, through educational webinars, or as visiting faculty members** (Majeed & Saeed, 2017). Patients in the home country would be able to obtain medical advice from highly trained physicians working abroad who also understand the local culture (Majeed & Saeed, 2017). These linkages could also **help to alleviate the absence of training in particular sub-speciality subjects in the home country**. Migrant physicians can also contribute to the home country by serving in emergency relief camps after natural disasters, assisting efforts to upgrade hospitals, improving training programmes in medical schools, and fostering research and development in developing countries (Majeed & Saeed, 2017).

Return channel

Migrants working abroad often gain knowledge and skills that are more advanced than, or lacking in their country of origin (Krasniqi & Williams, 2019). **Returning professionals** with technological, managerial, marketing or scientific competencies **often create new enterprises, transfer knowledge and increase the human capital stock in their country of origin** (OECD, 2017c). This, in turn, can enhance productivity and employment in the home country (Krasniqi & Williams, 2019). For further discussion, see the section on 'Economic benefits'.

Return migrants in the IPPMD study tend to be better educated than non-migrants, with the exception of Burkina Faso, Cambodia and Morocco (OECD, 2017c). In Kosovo, research finds that the majority of the Kosovar diaspora are based in the EU and the U.S., where they have had the opportunity to gain skills and productivity considered to be higher than workers in Kosovo. As such, return migrants could positively aid in reconstruction and development in the home country (Krasniqi & Williams, 2019). Following in the footsteps of the SANSAN network, NGOs in South Africa have established mechanisms to bridge the expatriate-home gap, including the site 'homecoming revolution'.⁶ It searches internationally for top African talent, with the aim of bringing them back to their respective home countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Kahn, 2015).

In the health care sector, research on return migration of health professionals to Nigeria finds that they have had a **positive impact on the country's healthcare system through the spread of health-related knowledge and good practices**, stemming from the high quality training they received overseas (Okafor & Chimereze, 2020). While in the host countries, some nurses studied further to become nurse practitioners and nurse consultants, and gained useful experience from working in more technologically advanced settings (Okafor & Chimereze, 2020). Returning health professionals have also helped to establish health facilities, such as clinics and maternity hospitals with proceeds from their time abroad (Okafor & Chimereze, 2020).

Research on the return of health professionals to Ghana finds that motivating factors for return include the desire to impart knowledge to young health professionals and to improve the health sector of the country (Adzei & Sakyi, 2014). This has resulted in large human capital gains in Ghana as there are a **critical mass of skills** (e.g. proficiency in in-vitro fertilisation and neonatal

⁶ www.homecomingrevolution.com

abnormalities), **which migrant health professionals have acquired in their host countries that would not otherwise have been available** in medical practice in Ghana (Adzei & Sakyi, 2014). Additionally, some nurses specifically stated how they can now address complicated medical situations with the skills acquired in patient care and or human relations (Adzei & Sakyi, 2014). Some professionals have taken up jobs at universities and nurses' training institutions (Adzei & Sakyi, 2014). Almost a quarter have established clinics, diagnostic centres and laboratories, day care centres, invested in business ventures and the stock exchange – providing employment, paying taxes, and contributing to the financial economy (Adzei & Sakyi, 2014). Respondents have also transmitted human capital through charitable activities, such as teaching pre-natal classes, training people from their villages or communities, or counselling young doctors for free (Adzei & Sakyi, 2014).

Other research finds that factors promoting return migration of internationally trained medical professionals include the establishment of new, state-of-the-art medical centres and an increase in medical tourism (Majeed & Saeed, 2017). Most of the medical facilities engaged in medical tourism are run by Western-trained physicians to ensure the same standard of care as in Western countries. These growing commercial businesses are creating opportunities for migrant physicians to return to their home countries (Majeed & Saeed, 2017).

5. Political and stability benefits

Prospect channel

The **prospect of emigration can improve the quality of political institutions in origin countries by giving skilled workers greater political voice and bargaining power vis-à-vis the elite, encouraging the elite to improve institutions and services to retain them** (Grečić, 2019; see Li et al., 2017).

Access to migration can also contribute to stability by dampening civil conflicts caused by natural resource competition and rent-seeking (Issifou, 2017). Rent-seeking activities may become less attractive to skilled workers, who have a high probability of migrating and finding a job in their field in the destination country; and people who exit may reduce pressure on natural resources (Issifou, 2017). Research based on the World Bank's bilateral data on international migration finds that emigration rates are shown to dampen the positive effect of natural resources on the outbreak of civil wars (Issifou, 2017). Other research, based on data from 117 developing countries for the period 1985-2010, also finds that emigration to developed countries decreases civil conflict incidence in the countries of origin (Preotu, 2016). Specifically, the increase in the emigration rate during the period decreased conflict incidence by 38 percent on average (Preotu, 2016, 2). The study finds no evidence that this effect is yielded through remittances. It also finds that the emigration of men reduces conflict likelihood, whereas the opposite holds for the emigration of women (Preotu, 2016).

Diaspora channel

Migrant diaspora have successfully influenced governance and political processes in their countries of origin, such as through raising awareness, promoting transparency, and funding political campaigns (Rasamoelison et al., 2021; Ivlevs & King, 2017). Such improvements can, in turn, contribute to economic growth in the home country (Rasamoelison et al., 2021).

While diaspora can influence home country political processes intentionally and directly, **migrants can also, without any political agenda, transfer social and institutional norms and practices to their family members in the home country** (Ivlevs & King, 2017). This concept has been termed ‘**social remittances**’ – meaning the ‘ideas, practices, identities and social capital’ that migrants internalise in countries of destination and transmit to their countries of origin – and that circulate between sending and receiving communities (Levitt, 1998, cited in Ivlevs & King, 2017; Naudé et al., 2017; Lacroix et al., 2016; Meseguer et al., 2016). The translation of global norms into locally applicable and usable concepts can empower local activists and contribute to societal change (Lacroix et al., 2016). While much research points to the large impact that social remittances can have on origin countries, there is limited evidence to confirm this, as the effects of the circulation of ideas, norms and practices are hard to capture (Chauvet et al., 2016).

A recent study of student migrants to English-speaking countries finds that they demonstrate an increase in the probability of interest in politics in the sending countries by almost 50 percent on average; and an increase in the probability of interest in a democratic political system in the sending countries by 28 percent on average (Rasamoelison et al., 2021, 11). These results are not replicated, however, with regard to student migrants to French-speaking countries, with no effect on domestic interest in politics and a lesser increase in the probability of interest in a democratic political system by 6 percent on average (Rasamoelison et al., 2021, 11).

Institutions and service delivery: Skilled migrants can affect their home country’s institutional development through various channels (Grečić, 2019; Li et al., 2017). In addition to possibly pressuring the elite to improve institutions to retain skilled workers (see ‘prospect channel’ above), emigrants can affect political institutions through social remittances (Grečić, 2019). Research looking at the effects of skilled emigrants on home country institutions five years later finds positive effects on political institutions, but negative or nil effects on economic institutions (Li et al., 2017). Research on 18 countries in Latin America explores the effects of both financial remittances and social remittances on perceptions of the role of the state in the home country (Meseguer et al., 2016). It finds that **respondents who communicate with relatives abroad are more likely than respondents without family abroad to think that the state should be active in job-creation and securing the population’s well-being** (Meseguer et al., 2016). This indicates a transmission of migrants’ social learning in their host country in favour of a pro-active state, which has a stronger effect than the possibility that financial remittances dampen expectations of the state by substituting for public goods (Meseguer et al., 2016).

In the case of Mexico, research based on surveys and interviews finds that having migration connections alters the political participation and behaviour of Mexicans living in Mexico through the **transmission of ideas of tolerance and greater accountability of government** (Perez-Armendariz and Crow, 2010; cited in Li et al., 2017.) Similarly, research on Moldova finds that the transmission of unfiltered information from migrants’ destination countries to the home country can play an important role in changing political preferences and strengthening the constituency for political change and reforms (Li et al., 2017).

Elections: Research finds that **migrants’ economic power can increase their voice and their ability to affect electoral outcomes in their home country** (Vari-Lavoisier, 2016). Studies of voting behaviour in the 2012 Senegalese presidential election demonstrate that Senegalese-born migrants living in the U.S. and in France were able to influence the election behaviour of their families in Senegal (Vari-Lavoisier, 2016; Chauvet & Mercier, 2014). **These transnational connections are evidenced through regular phone contact that allows for the transfer of**

political ideas and norms. Further, the greater material resources of migrants and their financial contributions to the home country gives them a stronger political voice and the power to influence political behaviour (Vari-Lavoisier, 2016; Chauvet & Mercier, 2014). In one study, two-thirds of the sample of migrants said they encouraged family members in the home country to vote and over half of the sample declared that their family members accepted the recommendation (Vari-Lavoisier, 2016, 22-24). **In countries where emigrants provide the population with financial contributions that significantly affect living conditions, non-migrants may have real incentives to vote for a candidate recommended by migrants,** thinking that their personal interest coincides with that of migrants (Vari-Lavoisier, 2016).

Corruption: Migrants can transfer to the home country better or worse institutional practices and reduce or increase corruption depending on whether corruption is more prevalent at home or abroad (Ivlevs & King, 2017). This value transfer effect can be reinforced or weakened by monetary remittances (Ivlevs & King, 2017). On the one hand, remittances can imply closer links and more frequent communication between migrants and their family members in the country of origin, making positive value transfer more effective (Ivlevs & King, 2017). On the other, it is possible that remittances increase the demand for public services (e.g. education, health care, business start-up) and thus contact with public officials, increasing the likelihood of bribery (Ivlevs & King, 2017). At the same time, remittances may enable people to consume private sector alternatives to publicly provided goods (e.g. private education or medical treatment), which could make public authorities less accountable (Ivlevs & King, 2017).

Empirical studies looking at the impact of remittances on institutions and corruption have produced mixed results (Baudassé et al., 2018). Some find that remittances have reduce levels of corruption and political clientelism, whereas others find remittances deteriorate the quality of governance and reduces level of spending on public services (see Baudassé et al., 2018). Recent research finds that the way in which migration affects levels of corruption depends on the political institutions in place. In closed regimes, remittances exacerbate corruption, while the dampening effect is observed in open regimes (Tyburski, 2014; cited in Baudassé et al., 2018).

Recent research on the Western Balkans finds that having relatives abroad reduces the likelihood of bribing public officials, renders bribe-taking behaviour by public officials less acceptable, and reduces the likelihood of paying bribes and being asked for bribes by public officials (Ivlevs & King, 2017). **While receiving monetary remittances may increase the risk of bribe solicitation, this seems to be countered by the beneficial effects created by the transfer of norms and attitudes towards corruption** (Ivlevs & King, 2017). This may be because corruption-prone public officials refrain from soliciting bribes from households with migrant connections, as members of migrant households may be more likely to condemn and report bribe soliciting behaviour by public officials (Ivlevs & King, 2017).

Return channel

The role played by returnees depends on their individual characteristics, the size of the return migrant community, and their migration experience, which can influence their political attitudes and behaviour positively or negatively (OECD, 2017c). **Returnees can be a source of supply and demand for better quality institutions** to the extent that they come back with knowledge of and a stronger desire for better practices (Li et al., 2017). Student returnees, for example, who have benefited from experiences with democratic institutions abroad, can form an influential group, transferring democratic values and helping to improve the quality of political institutions in home countries (Rasamoelison et al., 2021; OECD, 2017c). Exposure to different religious, social

or political norms in the host country can also enhance support for values of diversity in returnees compared to non-migrants (OECD, 2017c). In contrast, migrants could transfer discriminatory patterns of behaviour that they experienced in the host country (OECD, 2017c). While there are some case studies on how social norms and capital brought home by return migrants influence their countries of origin (OECD, 2017c), systematic evidence is limited, similar to the case of the diaspora channel (Li et al., 2017).

Institutions: Research on the impact of education abroad on leaders' propensity to democratise finds that there are two effects at play: the quality of education and a 'preference shock' (Mercier, 2016). **Leaders who studied abroad may have benefited from higher quality training and improved skills** (Mercier, 2016). Additionally, the 'preference shock' channel suggests that future leaders **develop a higher preference for democracy while living in the host country** (Mercier, 2016). Research on Latin America finds that the quality of top-level economic technocrats has grown significantly in recent decades due to their schooling in North America and Europe and their acceptance of values regarding transparency and accountability that have spill-over effects in their home countries (Li et al., 2017).

A study on the impact of the migration experience in Cape Verde finds that **return migrants can increase the demand for political accountability** and thus improve governance in their home countries (Batista & Vicente, 2011). The results of the study's voting experiment point to an overall positive impact of international emigration on the demand for improved political accountability in the country of origin (Batista and Vicente, 2011). They also find that the impacts are stronger in the case of migration to countries with better governance; and for return migrants than for current migrants, who can only indirectly influence their relationship networks in the home country (Batista and Vicente, 2011).

Elections: The **presence of return migrants tends to increase the electoral participation of non-migrants and to alter electoral behaviour within communities** (Chauvet and Mercier, 2014; OECD, 2017c). A study on the political impacts of Malian emigrants who returned home from non-African countries finds that they have a positive impact on participation rates and on electoral competitiveness in Mali (Chauvet & Mercier, 2014). They have a greater effect on electoral outcomes in areas where non-migrants are poorly educated, which may indicate a diffusion of political norms from returnees to non-migrants (Chauvet & Mercier, 2014).

6. Social benefits

Emigration can increase women's economic independence as emigrants are more commonly men than women (OECD, 2017a). Emigration can thus open up opportunities for women, when men leave and they take on greater household financial and managerial responsibility. These changes in responsibility and independence of women may persist even if the men return (see OECD, 2017a). The IPPMD data show that emigrant households are more likely to have women as the household head, particularly evident in Armenia, Cambodia, Morocco and the Philippines. Respondents in these countries confirmed the redistribution of roles between males and females in migrant households (OECD, 2017a). At the same time, however, there is increasing research documenting the deterioration in the mental health and well-being of caregivers (primarily women) and children whose partner/parent(s) have migrated (Ivlevs et al., 2019).

Diaspora channel

An emerging literature has considered the well-being consequences of receiving financial remittances from abroad. **In some cases, remittance receipt is positively associated with life satisfaction, possibly through increasing financial security and improvements in objective well-being** (e.g. access to food and water, child education) (see Ivlevs et al., 2019). This **helps to compensate for potential declines in subjective well-being** (e.g. the pain of separation and feeling overburdened with responsibilities) (Ivlevs et al., 2019). A recent study examining emigration's well-being consequences in 114 origin countries, including high-income countries, finds that having family members abroad is associated with greater evaluative well-being,⁷ and receiving remittances is linked with further increases in evaluative well-being, especially in poorer contexts (Ivlevs et al., 2019). **Remittances are unable, however, to fully offset increased stress and depression from having household members abroad** (Ivlevs et al., 2019). Stress and depression is lower in countries with higher emigration rates, indicating that people in these countries are likely to have developed coping mechanisms (e.g. support groups) for the psychological effects of emigration (Ivlevs et al., 2019).

Recent research on how migration affects social capital and networks serves to complement existing studies on objective or subjective well-being (Nikolova et al., 2017). Emigration can lower the civic participation (volunteering, charitable giving, and helping others) of populations remaining in the home country. This may be due to disruption of existing community networks and structures and greater responsibility for remaining household members, such as child- or elder-care that leaves little free time (Nikolova et al., 2017). At the same time, emigration could increase pro-social behaviour among remaining family and friends through the transmission of civic engagement values and the income effect through remittances (Nikolova et al., 2017).

Research on individuals and communities remaining in Bulgaria and Romania finds that **having close contacts abroad is positively associated with civic engagement** and that the cultural transmission of potentially new norms, values and behaviours from abroad could be driving the results (Nikolova et al., 2017). Migrants continuously interact with and influence their friends, families, and the communities back home via remittances, various forms of communication, and return visits (Nikolova et al., 2017). In addition, remittances could improve the monetary well-being and health of those in the home country, which could increase their pro-social behaviour (Nikolova et al., 2017). The study also finds that **respondents in the home country with contacts in countries with strong civil societies demonstrate higher levels of pro-social behaviour than respondents in countries with weaker civil societies** (Nikolova et al., 2017).

Diasporas have also engaged directly in the strengthening of civil society organisations in their home country (Haider, 2014). Diaspora communities from various conflict-affected African countries have provided resources and skills training, in some cases in-person themselves, to these organisations. The aim is not only to enhance the capacities and structures of civil society networks, but also to **instil in local communities a civic-mindedness** and collective mentality that can contribute to the development of social capital and eventually social transformation. The organisations that are emerging are hybrid in nature - locally developed but imbued with ideas and perspectives of transnational African diasporas (Mohamoud 2005; cited in Haider, 2014).

⁷ Evaluative well-being is an overall cognitive reflective assessment of the respondent's life as a whole, often reflecting people's capabilities, means, and long-term opportunities (Ivlevs et al., 2019, 115).

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