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Income and Remittances

Within the past few decades, the role of migration in influencing development has garnered very interesting public debate at the local, national, regional and international level. This has been particularly apparent in Ghana due to the timely and significant nature of remittances in the socio-economic development of the country. In recent times, attention has focused on remittances as a potential source of development finance given changes in the level and composition of official development assistance received by Ghana as it graduates to lower middle-income status.

While migration is a common strategy adopted by individuals and households to move out of poverty and improve living standards, the actual welfare impacts of this phenomenon have been a source of debate within the policy environment, governments, and among researchers. The movement of people has been implicitly assumed to have positive impacts on living standards, in that potential migrants are described as weighing up the costs and benefits of migration, measured by expected costs and earnings, and the migration decision is only triggered if the expected benefits outweigh the costs, where these costs and benefits are not restricted to financial forms. Our study will examine both economic and social outcomes of migration on both the migrant and the entire household.

Research questions

The overriding objective of the research is to understand whether and to what extent households with migrants benefit from migration. We will assess the welfare of households with and without migrants, exploring how their welfare has changed over time and what features of migration lead to relatively better or worse outcomes for migrants' families. In addition, the study will examine the importance of remittances at the household level, and the main drivers of migration intentions among individuals and households.

Potential contribution of this research

The findings of the study will be particularly useful for understanding the impact of migration from rural areas to other parts of Ghana and to international destinations and on the welfare of households in Ghana. Discussions in policy circles have often focused on how migration from rural areas or smaller towns into cities results in problems, such as urban unemployment, urban poverty, and the emergence of slums. These problems have been brought into even sharper focus in recent times, as the country's population has become increasingly urbanized, reaching 51% in 2010 and projected to increase to 63% by 2025. As a result, policy prescription in Ghana has largely occupied itself with attempts to curb rural-city migration despite the fact that not all migration is a rural-urban phenomenon. Yet, the relationship between rural-urban migration and poverty is quite poorly understood. The findings of this study will be useful both to potential migrants themselves, their households, broader communities, and to policy-makers concerned with social conditions, social equity and sustainable development.

About Centre for Migration Studies

The Centre for Migration Studies is located at the University of Ghana to undertake research, teaching, training, capacity building, policy assessment, development and dissemination in the area of migration. The Centre for Migration Studies

is the first such Centre in the West African sub-region and is seeking to be a regional leader in learning, teaching, research and capacity building through short-term training programmes in specific areas. Students at CMS enrol in Master of Arts, Master of Philosophy, PhD and Sandwich programmes in Migration Studies.

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