

## **DRIVERS OF EMIGRATION:**

### **New evidence on the impact of wealth and the quality of local amenities**

An improvement in economic conditions in many poor regions of the world may lead to more not less migration, as more people are able to cover the costs of migration. So to relieve migration pressure on developed nations, development policies should aim not only at enhancing wealth, but also at providing local infrastructures, public services and security – factors that will counteract the enthusiasm of individuals to emigrate.

These are the central conclusions of research by **Christian Dustmann** and **Anna Okatenko**, to be presented to the NORFACE migration conference at University College London this week. They study the relationship between wealth and migration plans by analysing data from a large international survey. The results show that:

\* In the poorest parts of the world, one in four individuals plans to move away from the area where they currently live.

\* Financial constraints impede many of these movements, particularly in the least developed parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

\* Contentment with public services provided locally, such as housing, schools, transport and water facilities, and security concerns are the most important factors in determining migrations.

One implication of these findings is that relaxing wealth constraints through economic development in some of the poorest countries, such as many nations in sub-Saharan Africa, will allow more individuals to cover migration costs, which may lead to more migrations.

On the other hand, improving local amenities, such as local infrastructure, public services, and safety conditions, could be a powerful tool to prevent people from moving away from their local area.

Professor Dustmann, one of the authors of the study, notes that in spite of slow growth and gloomy economic prospects, the rich world continues to attract immigrants from less developed countries, causing unease and resentment among the native populations.

Immigrants arrive in search of better lives for themselves and their children and are ready to pay huge sums of money needed to finance international migrations. But what holds many potential immigrants in the third world back are the large costs of migration. Many can simply not afford to travel or to cover the costs of illegal entry and initial settlement.

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‘Emigration, Wealth Constraints and the Quality of Local Amenities’ by Christian Dustmann and Anna Okatenko, Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration (CReAM), UCL