



Research outline

In order to understand whether migration represents a route out of poverty, an estimate of the counterfactual scenario - what might have been the outcome had migration not occurred - must be identified. Household survey data collected by our partners for Ghana, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe developed a methodology that can be applied to cross section data. While cross section data can be used to shed light on this question, panel data offers a much richer and more robust set of methodologies. This research will repeat three household surveys over the period 2017-2018 to construct two-wave panels for Zimbabwe, which would allow for a dynamic analysis of living standards and other outcomes of interest for households with and without migrants.

Research questions and objectives

The overriding research objective is to understand whether and to what extent migrant-sending households benefit from migration by explicitly identifying the counterfactual scenario, the welfare level that might have been enjoyed by the household if they had not experienced any migration. The research questions are as follows:

- How much does household welfare improve as a result of members migrating?
- How important are remittances in ensuring migration benefits migrant-sending households?
- What are the important drivers of migrant intentions?

Potential contributions of this research

The research will contribute to addressing the dearth in panel data on the impact of migration on household welfare in sub-Saharan African countries, which dominantly relies on cross section data, with only a few exceptions. On a policy level, the research showing the importance of migration and remittances among households will provide an impetus for reform to ease the movement of people and money across borders. As it is now, governments, whether in South Africa or in Zimbabwe criminalise human mobility and remittances, and this research will provide material for policy reflection and reform. The outputs of this study should provide an impetus for policy that engages with the need to ease the movement of people, money and goods.

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