

DEVELOPMENT AID AND MIGRATION – WHAT DO WE KNOW?

In the research overview *Migration and development: the role for development aid*, Professor **Robert E.B. Lucas** synthesises existing research on the links between foreign aid and migration.

1. Official development assistance (ODA) is increasingly used in an attempt to contain international migration. But development assistance is a blunt instrument for this purpose.

2. A much-debated question is **whether economic development in ODA receiving countries contributes to increasing or reducing emigration from these countries**. Lucas notes that it is difficult to answer that question with any certainty. According to his overview, the studies most often cited as evidence that aid is a driver of emigration are outdated and may well be statistically flawed.

Also, recent studies suggest that, under the right conditions, development aid can be linked to lower emigration rates.

3. **The composition of aid plays an important role** in whether or not that aid drives emigration from the receiving country, according to recent analyses. A tertiary education is associated with higher levels of emigration, particularly to high-income countries. Whether this, in turn, results in a brain-drain or brain-gain for the home country is debatable. If basic and secondary levels of education are expanded, **the employability of young people in the home country is improved, which tends to diminish departure**.

4. Migration is also driven by conflict and fragility. According to the OECD, more than 80 per cent of the world's poor could be living in fragile contexts by 2030. **Lucas asserts that the focus should be on addressing the underlying causes of conflict**. Today, less than 1 per cent of total ODA goes to reconstruction and disaster prevention, while 12 per cent goes to emergency responses.



The research overview in its entirety is available at www.eba.se



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