

Understanding the Impacts of Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is no stranger to migration. For decades LAC has experienced both intra-regional migration and migration outside the region. Recently, the Venezuelan exodus has reached unprecedented levels, with more than 3 million migrants located across the region. Other recent examples include the inflow of migrants of Haitian nationality in Chile and the acceleration of migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica in the last year. Remarkably, very little is known about the impacts of these migration episodes on destination countries or on migrant-sending countries.

Migration has also been the subject of intense policy debate, not only in industrial countries but also increasingly within the region itself. Unfortunately, discussions are not always grounded in solid empirical evidence, and more such evidence regarding the impacts of migration on our region is necessary to inform public debate and ultimately to design better policies as well.

Many aspects of the impact of migrants remain unknown. What is the effect, for example, of emigrants on those left behind in migrant-sending countries, including the impact on education investment decisions or employment outcomes? What is the impact of return migrants on origin countries in areas such as production, firm creation, firm productivity or exports? What is the impact of diasporas on origin countries through networking effects, including trade, FDI or knowledge diffusion? What is the impact of immigrants on destination countries in areas such as the labor market, the well-being of households, product diversity, firm creation, firm productivity or innovation?

In this network project we seek to advance knowledge in these areas for Latin America and the Caribbean. The aim of the research project is to contribute to a better understanding of the impacts of migration on LAC countries. Several teams will be working across different countries with the opportunity to share common methodologies and to exchange information and ideas.

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