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## Education and International Migration: Theory and Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa

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AWC Day 2020

**TOPIC: EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: THEORY AND EVIDENCE FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.**

**Abstract**

The estimated number of international migrants has increased from 150 million in 2000 to 272 million in 2020 (World Migration Report, 2020). According to the Pew research centre, Sub-Saharan Africa has been a strong-growing source of international migrant population since 2010. International migration magnifies 'Brain Drain' which constitutes an important threat for African economies because it depletes the continent from its human capital.

Over the last two decades, several African countries including Nigeria have reformed their education systems by making primary and secondary school access free. The main benefit of these reforms has been an increase in the overall demand for basic education. However, can part of Africans' decision to emigrate be the result of a past exposure to an educational policy?

In this paper, I am interested in establishing a causal relationship between exposure to an educational policy and pro-emigration attitude. To do so, I exploit the implementation of a compulsory schooling reform in Nigeria in the year 1999 named the Universal Basic Education (UBE). I construct a measure of eligibility for each school-age child to the UBE reform based on the year of birth which captures the total number of years of free education that an individual can receive from the reform.

The primary dataset used in this study is the Round 7 data of the Afro barometer. Afro barometer samples the economic, political, and social attitudes of citizens aged 18 or above. The dependent variable which is the intention to emigrate is an ordinal variable with three categories namely 'not at all', 'somewhat', and 'a lot'. Using an ordered logistic regression, I find that for a one year increase in free education, one can expect about 5% increase in the log odds of being in a higher level of interest in emigration. Exploring heterogeneity across gender, I find the effect to be more pronounced among men compared to women. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis further indicate that 'the desire to get a better job' is the primary mechanism driving the relationship between educational policy and pro-emigration attitude.

## Wilfried Youmbi Fotso

As policy implications, African leaders should not only care about increasing demand for education, they should also care about the quality of education supply as well as the creation of platforms of opportunities for talented Africans so that the latter advance their countries with the fruit of their knowledge.