Measuring the Impact of Information Campaigns on Irregular Migration:

Lessons from West Africa

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The need for Rigorous Evaluation of Information Campaigns

Growing Investment
Growing # Actors/Organizations
Limited Empirical Evidence
How Information Campaigns Work
Who is the target of the campaigns?

Migration Decision Spectrum

- Imminently Migrating
- At the Margin
- Not Interested in Migrating
Imminently Migrating

At the Margin

Not Interested in Migrating

**Migration Decision Spectrum**

**Evidence Gaps**

- What interventions work?
- Who benefits the most from the interventions?
- Does the impact vary in different contexts?
What we know so far..

Information campaigns increase risk perceptions by 25% in Senegal and 10% in Guinea (Tjaden & Dunsch, 2020; Bia-Zafinikamia & Tjaden, 2019)

The campaigns reduce intentions to migrate irregularly by 20% (Tjaden & Dunsch, 2020)

Other studies in Nigeria, Mali (e.g., Mesplé-Somps & Nilsson, 2021) The Gambia (e.g., Bah & Batista, 2018)
Current Studies
Study ‘1’: The Impact of Information Campaigns

**Project:** Migrants as Messengers (MaM)

**The approach:** Peer-to-peer communication—returned migrants share stories of their migration experiences

**Activities:** Caravans + town-hall discussions + social media posts + on-air discussions; etc.

**Where:** 7 countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia)

**When:** 2019-2022

- **Key outcome variables**
  - Knowledge about irregular migration
  - Perceptions of irregular migration
  - Migration intentions
  - Migration behavior
Research design: Randomized-controlled Trial (RCT)

- ‘Gold standard’ for measuring program impact
- Estimated impact is unbiased because of random assignment to treatment & control groups
Research design: Cluster RCT

**Step 1:** Selection of country

**Step 2:** Selection of Region

**Step 3:** Pick 30 intervention & 50-70 control Enumeration Areas (EAs)

**Step 4:** Randomly pick households within EA: survey sample

**Target (for each study/country):**
- 5,000 households (HHs)
- approx. 10,000 interviews (2 per HH)
Study 2: Effectiveness of WhatsApp & IVR in Measuring Migration Behavior

**Question:** Which phone survey mode is more effective

**Treatment arms:** WhatsApp vs IVR; Incentives vs no-incentives

**Sample size:** ~13,000 individuals/contacts (Guinea & Senegal)
Study 2: Results

✓ WhatsApp users are about 27% less likely than IVR users to start survey but about 18% more likely to complete if they start.

✓ The WhatsApp advantage is larger in Guinea where IVR response rates are very low.

✓ However, the rate of WhatsApp usage in Guinea (9%) is nearly three times lower than in Senegal.
Lessons learned

To conduct effective phone surveys:

➢ Keep the survey short

➢ Limit number of answer options (e.g., only two options)

➢ Test & pilot
Thank you!