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**CROSSING BORDERS**



# CAIPD

Cellule d'analyse d'impact des politiques  
de développement  
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## Development aid and migration in Senegal: How local employment projects shape mobility

Narcisse Cha'ngom

Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER)

Established at the initiative of the Directorate for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, CAIPD brings together researchers from LISER and J-PAL Europe to equip the Luxembourgish Cooperation with methodological tools for impact evaluations and programme monitoring in cooperation projects.



## Summary

Migration is influenced by local economic conditions, which foreign aid can address through targeted interventions. Strategic spatial allocation of aid, focusing on regions with high migratory pressure, is key to maximizing impact. This *policy brief* examines how development aid projects aimed at employment affect migration in Senegal, particularly among more mobile young adults (18-35). It finds that while such projects have no effect on total migration, they reduce internal migration by 21% and migration to transit countries (Libya and Morocco) by 15%. Transit countries are the common routes for illegal migration in Europe.

### Data

The study uses data from the 2013 and 2023 Senegalese Censuses, covering internal and international migration trends. Aid data is from the Senegalese Aid Management Platform (AMP), with 406 geo-localized projects between 2002 and 2017, totaling \$7.3 billion in commitments and \$3.4 billion in disbursements. Employment aid represents 4.2% of total disbursements. The dataset highlights regional disparities in migration flows and aid distribution.

### Method

A gravity model estimates migration probabilities based on local exposure to aid, focusing on employment-related projects that impact young adults (18-35). To address endogeneity, the study uses the political proximity of departments to the national leader at the time of aid commitments and a synthetic disbursement profile as instruments, thereby isolating exogenous variations in the spatial allocation of aid and the timing of aid disbursement.

### Results

Results show that employment-related aid influences migration, especially for young adults (18-35). While employment-related aid has no effect on total migration, it reduces internal migration and migration to transit countries. Targeted employment aid could mitigate migration pressures by enhancing local economic opportunities.

## Main Takeaways

The analysis reveals several key points:

- **Targeted Employment Aid Reduces Migration:** Employment-focused aid projects have a significant impact on reducing internal migration and migration to transit countries, especially among young adults.
- **Spatial Targeting is Critical:** Development aid must be geographically targeted to areas with high migration intensities to maximize its effectiveness.
- **Localized Data Improves Policy Design:** The use of geographically disaggregated data is important to design more effective policies that address the localized drivers of migration.

The analysis recommends prioritizing employment-focused aid and improving spatial targeting to address migration in Senegal. Targeting young adults (18-35) with job-related projects can reduce both internal and irregular migration. Strategically allocating aid to high-migration areas maximizes impact and promotes local economic development.

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