

Chapter 1

Integrating migration and development in the Dominican Republic: Overview and policy recommendations

The Dominican Republic is missing opportunities to harness the development potential embodied in its high rates of both emigration and immigration. The Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development (IPPM) project was conducted in the Dominican Republic between 2013 and 2017 to explore, through both quantitative and qualitative analysis, the two-way relationship between migration and public policies in five key sectors: the labour market, agriculture, education, investment and financial services, and social protection and health. This chapter provides an overview of the project's findings for the Dominican Republic, highlighting the potential for migration in many of its dimensions (emigration, immigration, remittances and return migration) to boost development, and analysing the sectoral policies that will allow this to happen.

The Dominican Republic has historically been a country of destination for migrants, attracting immigrant workers from neighbouring countries to its sugar plantations. International emigration took off in the 1960s, and in more recent decades has shifted to become a net emigration country. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of Dominicans in the United States nearly doubled. Remittances from emigrants abroad reached over USD 5.2 billion in 2015 (World Bank, 2016). The migration flows bring both opportunities and challenges to the country. The key question now is how to create a favourable policy environment, across all relevant sectors to enhance the positive, and minimise the negative, impacts of migration.

This report details the Dominican findings of a ten-country study on the interrelations between public policies, migration and development (IPPM; Box 1.1). It aims to provide policy makers with empirical evidence of the role played by migration in policy areas that matter for development. It also explores the influence on migration of public policies not specifically targeted at migration. This chapter provides an overview of the findings and policy recommendations.

Box 1.1. **What is the IPPMD project?**

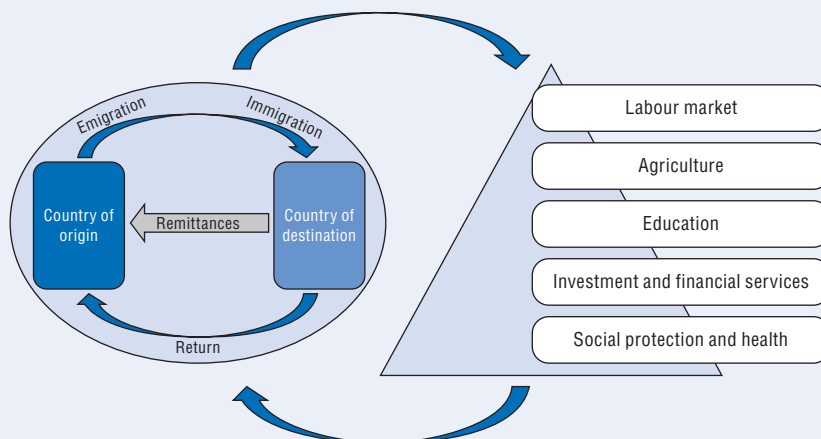
In January 2013, the OECD Development Centre launched a project, co-funded by the EU Thematic Programme on Migration and Asylum, on the **Interrelations between public policies, migration and development: case studies and policy recommendations** (IPPM). This project – carried out in ten low and middle-income countries between 2013 and 2017 – sought to provide policy makers with evidence of the importance of integrating migration into development strategies and fostering coherence across sectoral policies. A balanced mix of developing countries was chosen to participate in the project: Armenia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, Haiti, Morocco and the Philippines.

While evidence abounds of the impacts – both positive and negative – of migration on development, the reasons why policy makers should integrate migration into development planning still lack empirical foundations. The IPPM project aimed to fill this knowledge gap by providing reliable evidence not only for the contribution of migration to development, but also for how this contribution can be reinforced through policies in a range of sectors. To do so, the OECD designed a conceptual framework that explores the links between four dimensions of migration (emigration, remittances, return migration and immigration) and five key policy sectors: the labour market, agriculture, education, investment and financial services and social protection and

Box 1.1. **What is the IPPMD project?** (cont.)

health (Figure 1.1). The conceptual framework also linked these five sectoral policies to a variety of migration outcomes (Table 1.1).

Figure 1.1. **Migration and sectoral development policies: A two-way relationship**



The methodological framework developed by the OECD Development Centre and the data collected by its local research partners together offer an opportunity to fill significant knowledge gaps in the migration and development nexus. Several aspects in particular make the IPPMD approach unique and important for shedding light on how the two-way relationship between migration and public policies affects development:

- The same survey tools were used in all countries over the same time period (2014-15), allowing for comparisons across countries.
- The surveys covered a variety of migration dimensions and outcomes (Table 1.1), thus providing a comprehensive overview of the migration cycle.
- The project examined a wide set of policy programmes across countries covering the five key sectors.
- Quantitative and qualitative tools were combined to collect a large new body of primary data on the ten partner countries:
 1. A **household survey** covered on average around 2 000 households in each country, both migrant and non-migrant households. Overall, more than 20 500 households, representing about 100 000 individuals, were interviewed for the project.
 2. A **community survey** reached a total of 590 local authorities and community leaders in the communities where the household questionnaire was administered.
 3. **Qualitative in-depth stakeholder interviews** were held with key stakeholders representing national and local authorities, academia, international organisations, civil society and the private sector. In total, 375 interviews were carried out across the ten countries.

Box 1.1. **What is the IPPMD project?** (cont.)

- The data were analysed using both descriptive and regression techniques. The former identifies broad patterns and correlations between key variables concerning migration and public policies, while the latter deepens the empirical understanding of these interrelations by also controlling for other factors.

Table 1.1. **Migration dimensions and migration outcomes in the IPPMD study**

	Migration dimensions	Migration outcomes
Emigration	Emigration happens when people live outside of their countries of origin for at least three consecutive months. ¹	The decision to emigrate is an important outcome for the countries of origin, not only because it may lead to actual outflows of people in the short term, but also because it may increase the number of emigrants living abroad in the long term.
Remittances	Remittances are international transfers, mostly financial, that emigrants send to those left behind. ²	The sending and receiving of remittances includes the amount of remittances received and channels used to transfer money, which in turn affect the ability to make long-term investments. The use of remittances is often considered as a priority for policy makers, who would like to orientate remittances towards productive investment.
Return migration	Return migration occurs when international migrants decide to go back to and settle in, temporarily or permanently, their countries of origin.	The decision to return is influenced by various factors including personal preferences towards home countries or circumstances in host countries. Return migration, either temporary or permanent, can be beneficial for countries of origin, especially when it involves highly skilled people. The sustainability of return measures the success of return migration, whether voluntary or forced, for the migrants and their families, but also for the home country.
Immigration	Immigration occurs when individuals born in another country – regardless of their citizenship – stay in a country for at least three months.	The integration of immigrants implies that they have better living conditions and contribute more to the development of their host and, by extension, home countries.

1. Due to the lack of data, the role of diasporas – which often make an active contribution to hometown associations or professional or interest networks – is not analysed in this report.

2. Besides financial transfers, remittances also include *social remittances* – i.e. the ideas, values and social capital transferred by migrants. Even though social remittances represent an important aspect of the migration-development nexus, they go beyond the scope of this project and are therefore not discussed in this report.

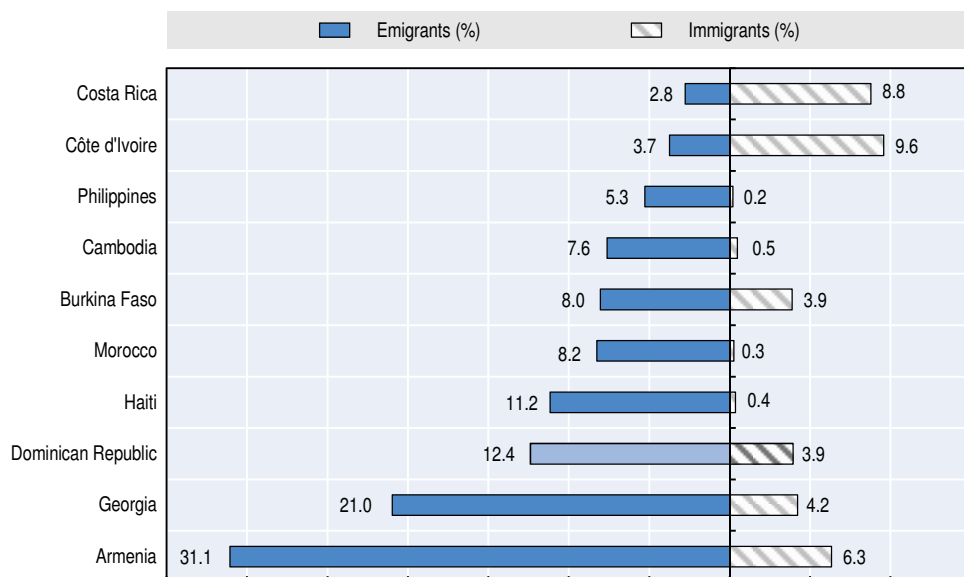
In October 2016, the OECD Development Centre and European Commission hosted a dialogue in Paris on tapping the benefits of migration for development through more coherent policies. The event served as a platform for policy dialogue between policy makers from partner countries, academic experts, civil society and multilateral organisations. It discussed the findings and concrete policies that can help enhance the contribution of migration to the development of both countries of origin and destination. A cross-country comparative report (OECD, 2017) and the ten country reports will be published in 2017.

Why was the Dominican Republic included in the IPPMD project?

The Dominican Republic is a country of both significant emigration and immigration flows. While overall it is a net emigration country, with the third highest share of emigrants in the IPPMD sample, immigrants represent almost 4% of the population (Figure 1.2). The United States is the most common destination for both female and male emigrants (63% and 69% respectively), followed by Spain, hosting 16% of the female emigrants and 10% of the male emigrants. The large majority of immigrants originate from Haiti: 95% of the female and 97% of male immigrants was born in Haiti. A majority, 59%, of the emigrants are women, while immigration is dominated by males, constituting 61% (Chapter 3).

Figure 1.2. **The Dominican Republic has the third highest rate of emigration among IPPMD countries**

Emigrant and immigrant stocks as a percentage of the population, all IPPMD countries (2015)



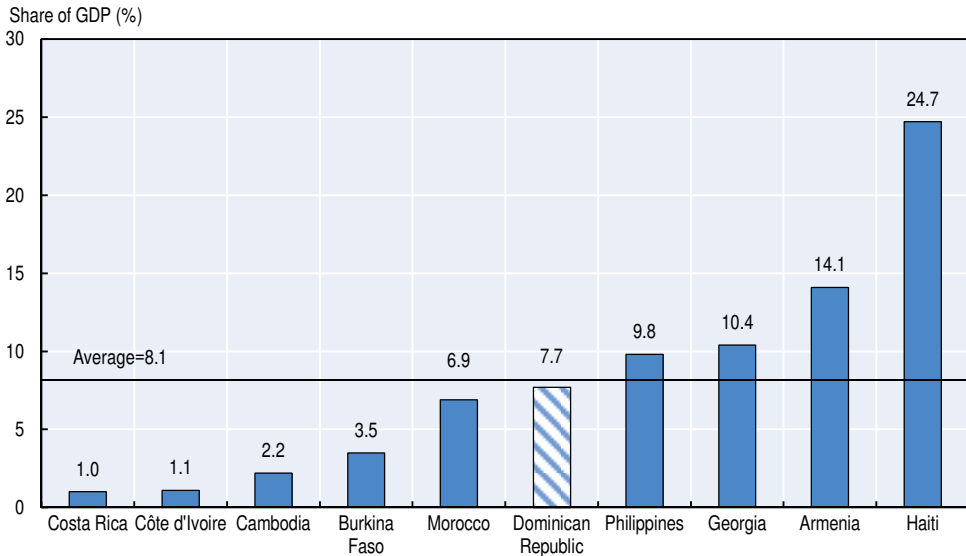
Note: Data come from national censuses, labour force surveys, and population registers.

Source: UN DESA (2015), *International Migration Stock: The 2015 Revision* (database), www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates15.shtml.

Remittances sent home by emigrants constitute an important source of income for many households in the Dominican Republic. These funds have the potential to improve the well-being of migrant households and spur economic and social development. The inflow of remittances has been growing continuously in the past 15 years, with the exception of the 2009 economic crisis when the economies of the main destination countries slowed (Chapter 2). In 2015, the inflow of remittances corresponded to almost 8% of the Dominican national

income, close to the average share in the IPPMD sample, at 8.1% (Figure 1.3). The volumes and modes of sending remittances depend on multiple factors, including the characteristics of the migrants and the sending and receiving costs.

Figure 1.3. **Remittances make an important contribution to the Dominican economy**
Remittances as a share of GDP (%), 2015



Source: World Bank (database), "Annual remittances data (inflows)", World Bank Migration and Remittance data, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data>.

How did the IPPMD project operate in the Dominican Republic?

The IPPMD project team worked in the Dominican Republic with the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development (MEPyD).¹ MEPyD provided information on country priorities, data and policies and assisted in organising country workshops and bilateral meetings. The IPPMD team also worked with the *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Sociales (CIES)* at the *Universidad Iberoamericana*, to ensure the smooth running of the project. CIES helped organise country-level events, contributed to the design of the research strategy, conducted the fieldwork and co-drafted the country report.

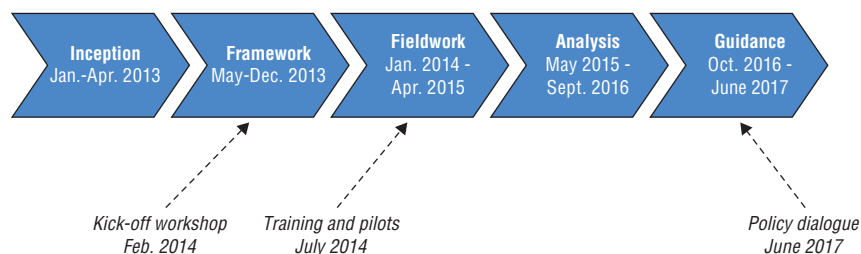
The IPPMD project team organised workshops and meetings in the Dominican Republic throughout the course of the project. The various stakeholders who participated, and who were interviewed during the missions to the Dominican Republic, also played a role in strengthening the network of project partners and setting the research priorities.

A kick-off workshop in Santo Domingo launched the Dominican project in February 2014, with support from the Delegation of the European Union to the

Dominican Republic. The workshop served as a platform to discuss the focus of the project with national policy makers and representatives of international organisations, employer and employee organisations, civil society organisations and academics. Following these discussions and in keeping with the overall IPPMD project design, the IPPMD project team decided to focus the analysis on five sectors: 1) the labour market; 2) agriculture; 3) education; 4) investment and financial services; and 5) social protection and health.

Following a training workshop and pilot tests conducted by the IPPMD project team, CIES collected quantitative data from 2 037 households and 54 communities and conducted 21 qualitative stakeholder interviews (Chapter 3). The project will conclude with a policy dialogue to share the policy recommendations from the findings and discuss with relevant stakeholders concrete actions to make the most of migration in the Dominican Republic (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. IPPMD project timeline in the Dominican Republic



What does the report tell us about the links between migration and development?

The findings of this report suggest that the development potential embodied in migration is not being fully exploited in the Dominican Republic. Taking migration into account in a range of policy areas – not just those directly related to migration – can allow this potential to be better tapped. The report demonstrates the two-way relationship between migration and public policies by analysing how migration affects key sectors – the labour market, agriculture, education, investment and financial services and social protection and health (Chapter 4) – and how migration is influenced by policies in these sectors (Chapter 5). Some of the key findings are highlighted below.

Labour market policies can encourage emigration

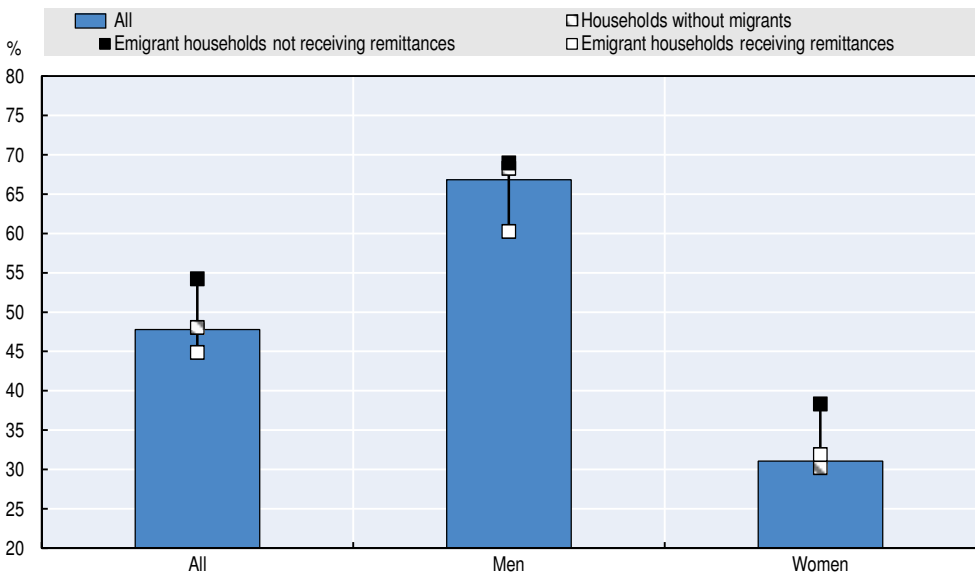
Employment is an important determinant of migration – emigration as well as immigration – in the Dominican Republic. Most survey respondents emigrated for work reasons, while better job opportunities and higher wages were the main pull factors for immigrants. In this context, labour market policy is hence likely to play an important role in migration decisions.

How are the Dominican Republic’s labour market policies affecting migration? It is often assumed that policies such as vocational training programmes will reduce people’s incentives to emigrate by making them more employable. The IPPMD analysis, however, shows that vocational training programmes can also make would-be migrants more employable overseas. Individuals who participated in vocational training programmes are more likely to plan to emigrate in the future (21%) than those who did not (13%). More in-depth analysis shows that the link between vocational training programmes and plans to emigrate are particularly important for women and the urban population.

The results also find that immigrants benefit less from labour market policies such as vocational training programmes and government employment agencies than the native-born population. Rectifying this would help them to integrate into the formal labour market.

Finally, migration also has an impact on the labour market by affecting labour supply. Receiving remittances seems to reduce the need for people to work, as households receiving remittances tend to have a lower share of working members than households not receiving remittances (Figure 1.5). However, when households have lost people to emigration and are not receiving remittances, the need for remaining household members to work is highest. These households were found to have the highest share of working adults, and women especially were much more likely to be working in such households.

Figure 1.5. **Households receiving remittances have fewer working members**
Share of household members aged 15-64 who are working (%)



Note: The sample excludes households with return migrants only and immigrants only.

Source: Authors’ own work based on IPPMD data.

Agricultural land titles facilitate emigration

The contribution of agriculture to the Dominican Republic's gross domestic product (GDP) is relatively limited compared to other IPPMD countries. In 2013, 14% of the employed population worked in the agricultural sector (FAO, 2016). This pattern is also reflected in the IPPMD sample, which shows that only one in five households is involved in agricultural activities. The analysis suggests that emigration may contribute to revitalising the agriculture sector by making it necessary for farming households to hire in labour.

The IPPMD survey also asked whether households benefited from agricultural policies (including agricultural subsidies, training programmes, and insurance mechanism). Very few households claimed to have done so, with the exception of one policy: land titling.

Land titling is an important policy component of the agricultural landscape in the Dominican Republic, where a high proportion of rural land is still occupied without legal title. This is reflected in the IPPMD sample, which found that only 39% of agricultural households have formal titles to their land. The Ministry of Agriculture has recently re-emphasised the importance of providing land titles for rural households, since secure ownership may encourage greater investments in productive agriculture activities. What do the IPPMD data say about the links between land titles and migration? The analysis shows that households with land titles are much more likely to have an emigrant (43% vs. 21%) and to be receiving remittances (39% vs. 25%), than those without the titles to their lands (Figure 1.6).

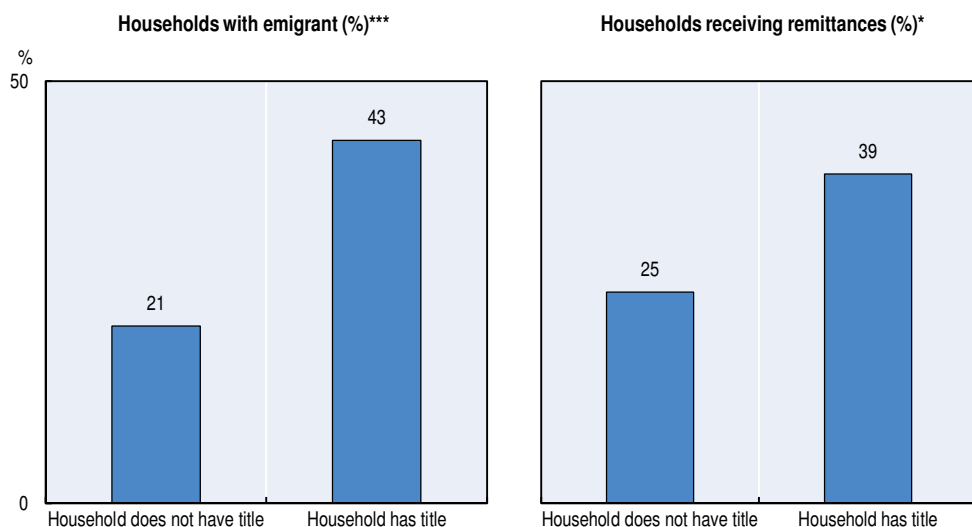
Immigrant households are not fully integrated into the education system

Migration and education are closely linked. Migration may change the skills composition of the population, while remittances can boost households' income and allow them to invest in educating their family. Access to education is also key for immigrant integration. Policies that improve access to quality education or provide financial support to keep children in school may decrease emigration motivated by the desire to finance children's education. However, they might also have the opposite effect – giving the household the financial means to allow a member to emigrate. Receiving financial support for children's education could also affect the amount and frequency of remittances sent home.

What does the IPPMD study tell us about the link between migration and education in the Dominican Republic? The findings show both positive and negative effects of migration on education outcomes. Emigration and return migration tend to increase educational spending, and lead to a shift towards more private schooling, especially among households with return migrants. At the same time, the results show that households that receive conditional cash transfers² are less likely to receive remittances. This lends weight to the idea that government financial support programmes can “crowd out” private transfers.

Figure 1.6. **Land titling may increase emigration**

Share of households with an emigrant and receiving remittances, by whether the household has title for land



Note: Only households owning and working land are considered. A chi-squared test was used to measure the level of statistical significance between each set of groups. Results that are statistically significant are indicated as follows: ***: 99%, **: 95%, *: 90%.

Source: Authors' own work based on IPPMD data.

Education is a fundamental tool for the social integration of immigrant children and children of immigrant parents. However, the IPPMD findings show that children with an immigrant background are less likely to attend school than native-born children. The findings also show that immigrant households have less access to educational support programmes (Figure 1.7). This may be undermining immigrant integration, and the achievement of the country's goal of ensuring universal education.

Financial inclusion and literacy could spur remittance-led investment

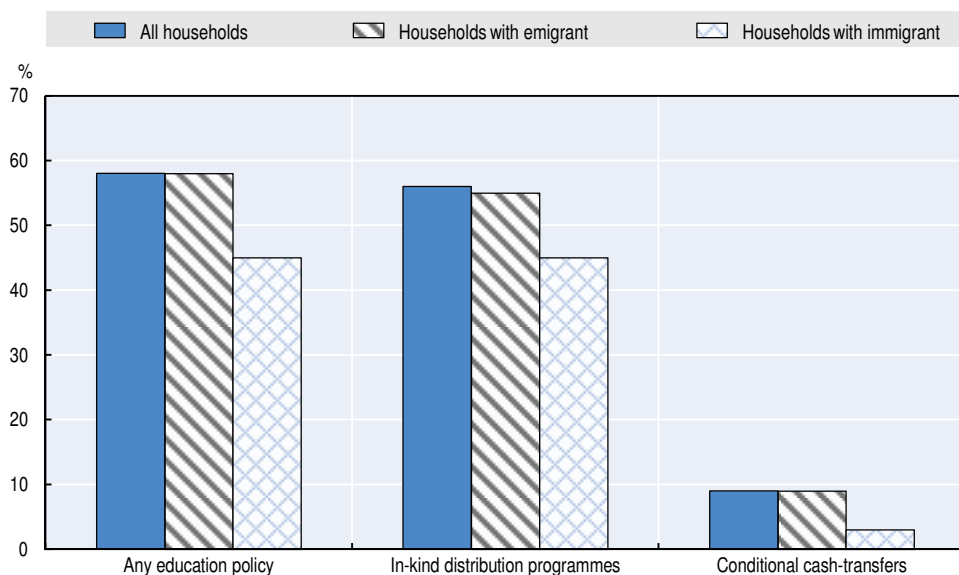
Migration, notably through return migration and remittances, can help households overcome credit constraints and encourage investments in business activities and real estate. Simultaneously, a favourable investment climate and an inclusive financial sector can strengthen the development impact of remittances by encouraging more savings, as well as better matching savings with investment opportunities. Access to the formal financial sector – i.e. possessing a bank account – can facilitate the sending and receiving of higher levels of remittances and through formal channels.

The IPPMD findings show that remittances are positively linked with business ownership in the Dominican Republic, but only in urban areas. Return

migration does not seem to be linked to entrepreneurship in either rural or urban areas. Furthermore, only 36% of households in the IPPMD sample have a bank account, meaning that almost two-thirds of the households in the sample are unbanked. While the findings confirm that households with a bank account are more likely to receive remittances, having a bank account does not seem to affect the level of remittances received. The findings also show that most households receive remittances through money transfer operators. A remittance market largely dominated by a few money transfer operators may push up remittance transfer costs.

Figure 1.7. Immigrant households are the least likely to benefit from education policies

Share of households benefiting from education programmes (%), by migration status



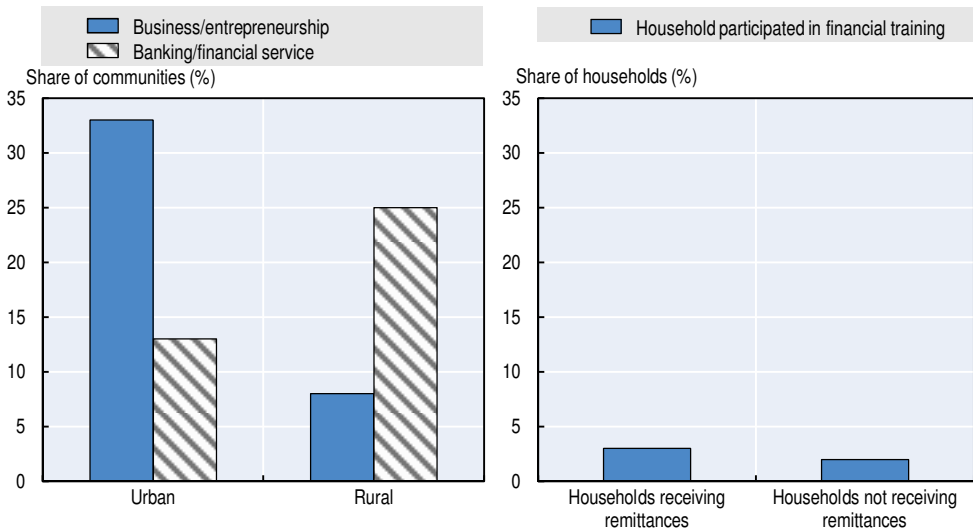
Note: The category “Any education policy” includes all cash-based and in-kind distribution programmes included in the household survey. The sample includes households with children in school age (6-20 years old).

Source: Authors’ own work based on IPPMD data.

While financial training programmes and business management courses help to build financial literacy, and can encourage investment in productive assets, the coverage of such training in the Dominican Republic is low. Only 3% of households in the sample had participated in a financial training programme in the past five years (Figure 1.8). In addition, few of the surveyed communities offer financial training or courses in business management. This might be a missed opportunity to channel remittances into more productive investments.

Figure 1.8. **Household participation in financial training programmes is very low**

Share of communities which offer financial and business training (left graph);
share of households participating in financial training programmes (right graph)



Source: Authors' own work based on IPPMD data.

Immigrants are less covered by social protection and health care

Widespread social protection and healthcare coverage can reduce people's need to emigrate and improve conditions for immigrants, allowing them to integrate better and become net contributors to the country's welfare system (OECD/European Union, 2015; Huber, 2015). The Dominican Republic's 2010-30 National Development Strategy sets out to guarantee health and comprehensive social security for everyone, while a 10-year health plan (2006–2015) addressed the principal challenges necessary to transform the country's health situation (MISPAS, 2006). In practice, implementing universality in health access has been difficult, however, and many individuals and regions remain without adequate coverage.

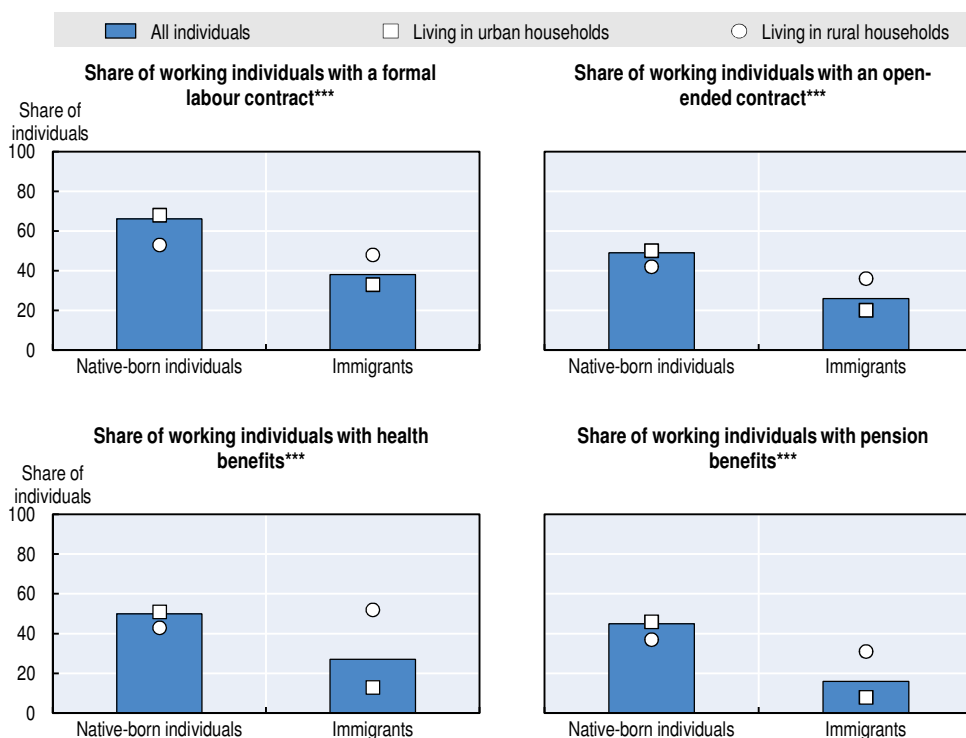
IPPMD analysis of how immigration affects the social protection and health sectors found little evidence that immigrants in the Dominican Republic are net beneficiaries of welfare payments or healthcare. Immigrant households tend to be less likely than other households to receive social transfers from the government, especially in rural areas. In addition, immigrants in both rural and urban areas are less likely to have access to a health centre than non-immigrants.

Formal labour contracts are a common way in which workers and their families access health care and other social benefits. Apart from providing social benefits, such contracts may also enable workers to join unions and

strengthen their rights on the labour market in other ways. Informality is a challenge in the Dominican labour market, and the IPPMD findings show that immigrants are significantly less likely to be covered by formal contracts and social benefits than native-born workers (Figure 1.9). Only 38% of immigrant workers have a formal labour contract, 27% have health benefits and 16% have pension benefits. The differences between immigrant and native-born workers are particularly pronounced in urban areas. The results also show that the difference in access to social protection and health benefits between immigrant and native-born workers is more pronounced for women. Addressing the inequalities in access to employment in the formal sector is important in order to better integrate immigrants into the labour market and society at large.

Figure 1.9. **Immigrants in urban areas have less access to social protection**

Share of individuals with access to social protection, by whether individual is an immigrant



Note: A chi-squared test was used to measure the level of statistical significance between each set of groups (all individuals). The sample includes all individuals, whether they are working in agriculture or not. Results that are statistically significant are indicated as follows: ***: 99%, **: 95%, *: 90%.

Source: Authors' own work based on IPPMD data.

A more coherent policy agenda can unlock the development potential of migration

The report suggests that migration, through the dimensions analysed in the IPPMD study – emigration, remittances, return migration and immigration – can contribute to economic and social development in the Dominican Republic. However, this development potential does not seem to be fully realised.

To harness the development impact of migration, the country requires a more coherent policy framework. The current development agenda is placing emphasis on the challenges rather than the potentials of migration. The following sections provide policy recommendations for each sector studied in the IPPMD project in the Dominican Republic. Policy recommendations across different sectors and different dimensions of migration stemming from the ten-country study are also specified in the IPPMD comparative report (OECD, 2017).

Integrate migration and development into labour market policies

The IPPMD study found close, and sometimes unexpected, links between migration and labour market in the Dominican Republic. Remittances appear to reduce people's need to work, especially women, while vocational training programmes appear to be giving people, particularly women and those in urban areas, the skills required to seek work overseas. Immigrants, however, are not getting equal access to employment agencies or vocational training. What do these findings suggest for policy?

- Refine and target vocational training programmes to better match demand with supply. Mapping labour shortages and strengthening co-ordination mechanisms with the private sector are important steps.
- Target training programmes at return migrants and immigrants, to help them (re)integrate into the labour market.
- Widen the coverage of employment agencies to reach immigrants, return migrants and current emigrants to ensure they are adequately informed about formal salaried jobs. Building closer connections between employment agencies and the private sector will be important for achieving this.

Leverage migration for agricultural development

The IPPMD findings show that agricultural households are losing valuable labour to emigration. If they cannot afford to replace these workers – if they are not receiving remittances, for example – food security and poverty could deteriorate. Emigration may contribute to revitalising the agriculture sector by increasing the demand for paid jobs in the sector, but only where remittances and income levels allow. Land titling is an important policy component of

the agricultural landscape in the Dominican Republic, but may be spurring emigration. These findings suggest the following policy recommendations:

- Ensure that agricultural households can replace lost labour by ensuring better coverage by labour market institutions in rural areas.
- Tie land-titling programmes to migration and development schemes, such as increasing the coverage of money transfer operators in rural areas, creating programmes to channel remittances towards agricultural investment and to facilitate investment and integration by return migrants in rural areas.

Enhance the links between migration and investment in education

The study has revealed a desire amongst the population for better quality education: people are using emigration to enable them to spend more on educating their children, including private schooling. At the same time, while access to education is a fundamental tool for the social integration of immigrant children and children of immigrant parents, the findings show that such children are less likely to attend school than native-born children, and have less access to educational support. Existing educational access programmes, such as conditional cash transfers, however, are reducing remittance inflows. These findings suggest the need to:

- Increase investments in education quality and access so as to meet the growing demand for education driven by remittances and immigration.
- Enforce and ensure quality and access to public and private educational institutions to meet the higher demand for good education driven by remittances and return migration.
- Expand cash and in-kind distribution programmes in areas with high immigration rates, and make sure that immigrants have equal access to such programmes in order to support universal education and immigrant integration.
- Collect migration and remittance information in conditional cash transfer programme data to monitor remittance changes over time and better understand the full impact of the programme.

Strengthen the links between migration, investment, financial services and development

Migration can help increase investments in productive activities such as businesses and entrepreneurship. Simultaneously, a favourable investment climate and an inclusive financial sector can strengthen the development impact of remittances by encouraging more savings and investments. The IPPMD findings show that more can be done to tap into the investment and entrepreneurial opportunities on offer from migration. While remittances are positively associated with business ownership in the Dominican Republic in urban areas, return migrants do not seem to be investing as much as they could. The large share of households in the Dominican Republic still without bank

accounts and poor coverage of financial training mean the country may be missing opportunities for promoting the productive investment of remittances.

The following steps could help to improve this situation:

- Expand financial service provision by increasing competition among service providers
- Increase financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills among households in communities with high emigration rates to boost remittance investment.
- Facilitate business start-up, for example by providing business management courses and access to credit to encourage remittance investments in new businesses.

Expand the coverage of social protection and health services to improve migration and development outcomes

Increasing immigration flows into the Dominican Republic, particularly in the past 15 years, have raised concerns about potential negative effects on the local labour market, and on limited health and social protection resources. The analysis reported here, however, finds little evidence that immigrants in the Dominican Republic are net beneficiaries of welfare payments or healthcare. In fact, immigrant households tend to be less likely than other households to access health care centres and to receive social transfers from the government. Immigrants are also significantly less likely to be covered by formal contracts and social benefits than native-born workers, especially in urban areas. Addressing these inequalities in access to employment in the formal sector is important in order to better integrate immigrants into the labour market and society at large. To achieve this, policy makers can:

- Increase *de jure*, but also *de facto*, universal access to social protection, such as pension plans, medical benefits, labour union membership and formal labour contract provisions, especially in rural areas.
- Investigate why immigrants use health facilities less frequently, and where needed adjust investments in such facilities in neighbourhoods where there are high levels of immigration, particularly in rural areas.

Roadmap of the report

The next chapter describes the migration landscape for the Dominican Republic, describing how migration has evolved and reviewing the existing research on the links between migration and development. It also briefly describes the current policy context and institutional frameworks related to migration. Chapter 3 explains the implementation of fieldwork and the analytical approaches used for the empirical research. It also summarises the broad findings of the IPPMD survey in terms of general emigration, immigration, remittances and return migration patterns. Chapter 4 discusses how the four

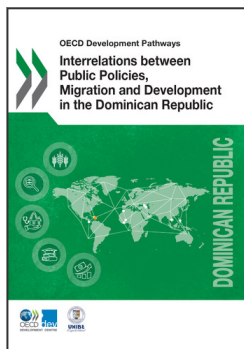
dimensions of migration affect five key sectors in the Dominican Republic: the labour market, agriculture, education, investment and financial services, and social protection and health while Chapter 5 explores how the policies in these sectors can influence migration outcomes.

Notes

1. Ministerio de Economía, Planificación y Desarrollo.
2. The CCT programme *Solidaridad* in the Dominican Republic was developed after the economic crises that hit the country in 2003, providing cash transfers to poor households to invest in education, health and nutrition.

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From:

Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development in the Dominican Republic

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264276826-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD/Centro de Investigaciones Económicas, Administrativas y Sociales (2017), "Integrating migration and development in the Dominican Republic: Overview and policy recommendations", in *Interrelations between Public Policies, Migration and Development in the Dominican Republic*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264276826-5-en>

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