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INFORMATION AND DECISION- MAKING AMONG SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN MIGRANTS TRAVELING TO EUROPE THROUGH LIBYA

TASKING N015

Contract No. GS-10F-0033M/7200AA18M00016

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ACRONYMS

C-TIP	Combating Trafficking in Persons
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DRG-LER	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Learning, Evaluation, and Research Activity
EU	European Union
EUCAP	European Union Capacity Building
EUTF	European Trust Fund for Africa
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MMC	Mixed Migration Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOI	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (here, in reference to the firm NOI Polls)
NORC	National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arrivals to Europe from Africa, especially across the central Mediterranean route from Libya and Tunisia to Italy, have fallen since mid-2017. Most observers believe that European Union (EU) migration policies, particularly EU and Libyan interdiction measures as well as agreements between the EU and various governments, are responsible for the falling numbers of arrivals. Yet EU officials and many experts also believe that the underlying drivers of migration, including migrants' hopes for better lives in Europe and/or migrants' desires to flee oppressive regimes and conflict zones, are still firmly in place.

Even amid the EU's crackdown, many aspiring migrants from sub-Saharan Africa continue to journey across the Sahara to Libya. Conditions remain grim for these migrants. To take just one figure, an estimated 5,000-6,000 aspiring or returned migrants were being held in detention centers in Libya as of July 2019,¹ when humanitarian organizations called for the centers' closure in protest at the brutal conditions there.

Understanding the drivers of migration is crucial for creating and implementing effective long-term policies that look beyond interdiction. As part of USAID's Countering Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP) effort, this paper surveys literature on the drivers of irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa through Libya to Europe. The paper further examines what the literature says the role of information is in shaping migrant decision-making. The paper also assesses the extent to which information campaigns shape migrants' decisions. Such information campaigns typically involve efforts to provide migrants and aspiring migrants with new or newly contextualized information about the dangers of land and sea journeys, as well as about the situations they may face in Europe in terms of obtaining residency and work permits. The literature reviewed for this paper primarily includes reports from governmental and nongovernmental bodies, as well as published and ongoing scholarly research.

The review is based on the following questions:

- What are the primary drivers of irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe through Libya?
- How important are economic incentives at the destination of arrival versus other incentives as drivers of migration?
- How important is information about the risks and potential costs of attempting irregular migration in the decision to migrate?
- Are decisions to migrate irregularly sensitive to interventions that provide accurate information about the risks and potential costs of the journey or other dissuading information / messaging?
- What is the state of existing literature on policy and programmatic interventions designed to reduce migration through the Sahel and Libya?
- What questions remain unanswered, and what are some types of interventions that have not been rigorously tested?

¹ MSF, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Refugees in Libya's Detention Centres," 12 July 2019, <https://www.msf.org/out-sight-out-mind-refugees-libyas-detention-centres-libya>.

- Finally, what conclusions can we draw from the literature for practical USAID programming recommendations?

KEY FINDINGS

1. African migrants to Europe tend to come from the northern half of the continent.² The top five countries of origin for African migrants in Europe are Nigeria (390,000), South Africa (310,000), Somalia (300,000), Senegal (290,000), and Ghana (250,000).³ Eritrea is also a major source of migrants: 20,295 Eritreans sought asylum in Europe in 2013; 46,745 in 2014; 47,020 in 2015; and 38,808 in 2016.⁴ During 2009-2018, the central Mediterranean routes (Libya to Italy) were the second-largest source of migrants to Europe, with more than 780,000 arrivals, while the largest source was the eastern Mediterranean route (Turkey to Greece), with more than 1.2 million arrivals). A March 2016 agreement between the European Union and Turkey substantially reduced migration along the eastern route, and beginning in 2017 arrivals on the central Mediterranean route fell as well.
2. Commentators tend to reduce migration incentives to one pull factor (jobs) and two push factors (conflict and poverty), but the literature suggests more complicated ways of thinking about patterns in migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. Pull factors include not merely jobs but also migrants' more holistic and context-specific desires for a better life. Micro-demographics also are important for understanding migration, in that migrants tend not to be the poorest of the poor. Relatedly, much of the literature suggests that increased economic development can increase rather than decrease migration.
3. Information is critical for migrant decision-making. Accurate information can make potential migrants more aware of dangers on the journey and of conditions in Europe. However, the manner in which migrants receive and process information depends partly on social networks. These networks include organized criminals that shape the flows of information aspiring migrants receive.
4. The relationship between migrants and smugglers is not always negative. Some smugglers, keen to avoid losing business, try to avoid imperiling migrants. Yet the increased risks associated with migration and smuggling have, since around 2016, pushed some smugglers toward more predatory and extortionist behavior along migration routes and within Libya. Some literature, meanwhile, suggests that aspiring migrants adapt to changing circumstances and rising dangers by switching preferred routes through Africa.
5. Diasporas are important sources of information. Yet some diasporas perpetuate misleading images of life in Europe.
6. The role of social media in shaping migrant information and decision-making is widely debated, and as with other sources of information, the role of social media can change at different points of any migrant's journey. While one study concluded the data is insufficient for drawing any conclusions at all, another found only a limited role for social media.

² Marie-Laurence Flahaux and Hein De Haas, "African Migration: Trends, Patterns, Drivers," *Comparative Migration Studies* 4:1 (2016), available at <https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40878-015-0015-6>.

³ Pew Research, "At Least a Million Sub-Saharan Africans Moved to Europe Since 2010," 22 March 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/03/22/at-least-a-million-sub-saharan-africans-moved-to-europe-since-2010/>. Pew's estimates are for EU countries and also Norway and Switzerland. Pew's 2017 figures were the most recent that the authors found and were still being used by Pew at the time of writing.

⁴ John R. Campbell, "Fleeing for Freedom, Eritrean Refugees Are Being Abandoned by Europe," *The Conversation*, 14 March 2017, <http://theconversation.com/fleeing-for-freedom-eritrean-refugees-are-being-abandoned-by-europe-73712>.

7. The efficacy of information campaigns is also debated. Campaigns with the highest chance of success prioritize the dissemination of messages through offline, person-to-person social networks; focus on disseminating information about hardships within Europe rather than en route; include a variety of voices, platforms, and messages; and do not make simplistic promises about a better life in one's own country or attempt to misrepresent Europe's level of openness to legal migration.
8. Even within these guidelines, successful campaigns would also likely have to be customized according to the countries and regions targeted and be effectively paired with thoughtful development initiatives that take into account long-term community needs, the potentially destructive impacts of existing migration policies, and the ways that increasing levels of economic development can actually spur migration.
9. There appears to be room for information campaigns more specifically focused on women in order to highlight trafficking risks. Here, the most effective approach would likely avoid discouraging migration generally, but rather alerting women to the potential for being tricked and trafficked.
10. Information campaigns should appreciate that migrants give careful consideration to any decision to migrate. The challenge of information campaigns is to come up with a compelling argument against what is oftentimes a carefully considered and life-changing decision. Promises of short-term safety will likely not appeal to people who have already made up their minds to risk their lives.

The paper is organized as follows. The first section provides a brief overview of migration trends in Africa, followed by a discussion of the role incentives and information play in shaping migration decisions. Here, we also consider the extent to which current dissuasion programming is effective. The next section offers concluding remarks, followed by recommendations for programming.

INTRODUCTION

TRENDS IN MIGRATION FROM AFRICA TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

Migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe surged in 2014, peaked in 2016, and remains high compared with pre-2014 levels.⁵ African migrants to Europe tend to come from the northern half of the continent.⁶ According to 2017 figures, some of the most recent available, the top five countries of origin for African migrants in Europe are Nigeria (390,000), South Africa (310,000), Somalia (300,000), Senegal (290,000), and Ghana (250,000).⁷ Eritrea is also a major source of migrants: 20,295 Eritreans sought asylum in Europe in 2013; 46,745 in 2014; 47,020 in 2015; and 38,808 in 2016.⁸

During 2009-2018, the central Mediterranean routes (primarily from Libya to Italy, but also from Tunisia) were the second-largest source of migrants to Europe, with more than 780,000 arrivals. There were 45,298 arrivals in Europe through the central Mediterranean route in 2013; 170,110 in 2014, 153,842 in 2015; 181,436 in 2016; and 119,369 in 2017.⁹ Arrivals along the central Mediterranean route fell in the second half of 2017, and dropped to fewer than 23,000 in 2018. By December 2018, the central Mediterranean route was actually the least traveled of the three main Mediterranean routes;¹⁰ as the trend continued in 2019, figures were dropping “to pre-crisis levels.”¹¹

EU reports seem reticent to explicitly attribute the drop to interdictions,¹² but other observers point to the ways that interdictions have discouraged crossings – but may have also pushed aspiring migrants to take the Western Mediterranean route (Morocco to Spain), where arrivals doubled from 2017 to 2018.¹³ Relatedly, it is difficult to track trends in the numbers of migrants arriving in Libya and whether or not such trends correlate with the drop in crossings over the central Mediterranean. Estimates of the numbers of migrants present in Libya range by hundreds of thousands; IOM’s figure as of July 2019 was 655,000.¹⁴ The numbers of aspiring migrants held in

⁵ An estimated 91,000 sub-Saharan Africans applied for asylum in Europe in 2013; 139,000 in 2014; 164,000 in 2015; 196,000 in 2016; and 168,000 in 2017. Pew Research, “At Least a Million Sub-Saharan Africans Moved to Europe Since 2010,” 22 March 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/03/22/at-least-a-million-sub-saharan-africans-moved-to-europe-since-2010/>.

⁶ Marie-Laurence Flahaux and Hein De Haas, “African Migration: Trends, Patterns, Drivers,” *Comparative Migration Studies* 4:1 (2016), available at <https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40878-015-0015-6>.

⁷ Pew Research, “At Least a Million Sub-Saharan Africans Moved to Europe Since 2010.” Pew’s estimates are for EU countries and also Norway and Switzerland.

⁸ John R. Campbell, “Fleeing for Freedom, Eritrean Refugees Are Being Abandoned by Europe,” *The Conversation*, 14 March 2017, <http://theconversation.com/fleeing-for-freedom-eritrean-refugees-are-being-abandoned-by-europe-73712>.

⁹ UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting, “Mixed Migration Trends in Libya: Changing Dynamics and Protection Challenges,” 2017, p. 2, available at http://www.altaiconsulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2017_Mixed-Migration-Trends-in-Libya-Final-Report-Web.pdf. See also Stefano Torelli, “Migration Through the Mediterranean: Mapping the EU Response,” European Council on Foreign Relations, undated, https://www.ecfr.eu/specials/mapping_migration.

¹⁰ European Commission Emergency Response Coordination Centre, “DG ECHO Daily Map,” 11 December 2018, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/20181211_DailyMap_migration_crisis_CEW_v3.pdf.

¹¹ European Commission, “Progress Report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration,” 6 March 2019, p. 3, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20190306_com-2019-126-report_en.pdf.

¹² See, for example, Frontex, “Risk Analysis for 2019,” February 2019, pp. 6-9, https://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis_for_2019.pdf.

¹³ Adam Rasmi, “The Drop in Migrants Dying in the Mediterranean Hides a Disturbing Reality,” *Quartz*, 4 January 2019, <https://qz.com/1514244/the-disturbing-reality-behind-the-drop-in-mediterranean-migrant-deaths/>.

¹⁴ IOM, “Hunger, Displacement and Migration: A Joint Innovative Approach to Assessing Needs of Migrants in Libya,” November 2019, p. 4, <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000110392/download/>.

Libyan detention centers rose from 5,500 in 2017 to 9,300 in 2018, but most of that increase appears connected with migrants arrested at sea and then placed in detention, rather than with elevated numbers of arrivals from the south to the Mediterranean coast;¹⁵ estimates of detainees fell to around 5,000-6,000, as noted above, by summer 2019. Meanwhile, some experts nuance the idea of a “shift” from the central Mediterranean route to the western Mediterranean route, pointing out that some of the nationalities most represented along the central route (Nigerians and Eritreans) are not the most represented nationalities amid the uptick on the western route; that is, Nigerians and Eritreans are not shifting west. The same experts, though, add that migrants from other West African countries (such as Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal) do seem to be deliberately shifting the central to the western route.¹⁶ This could mean that overall arrivals to Libya are falling, but not as dramatically as the crossings along the Mediterranean; many aspiring migrants still appear to be heading to Libya.

AFRICAN MIGRATION TO LIBYA

There are three main routes for Africans traveling to Libya and then on to Europe via the central Mediterranean routes. The less-traveled western route involves transit hubs in Mali and Niger, then a journey through the Algerian desert and into Libya. The more popular central route, which is followed mainly by migrants from West and Central Africa, leads through Niger and particularly the city of Agadez into southwestern Libya in the vicinity of Sebha. The eastern route, which is mostly used by migrants from East Africa, leads through Sudan (and sometimes Chad) into southeastern Libya, especially the vicinity of Kufra.¹⁷

Routes have shifted over time. Within Libya, increasing conflict since 2013-2014 has shaped the eastern route such that it now usually bypasses the northeast; inside Libya, the western and eastern routes now tend to converge as migrants head toward Tripoli, Bani Walid, and other destinations on or near the northwestern coast.¹⁸ The details of many migrants’ itineraries, however, remain opaque to researchers.¹⁹

WHAT DRIVES IRREGULAR MIGRATION FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA TO EUROPE VIA LIBYA?

Multiple incentives drive irregular migration, and many reports urge humility when drawing conclusions about motivations. Several authors note that “the majority of existing data often seems either outdated or not comprehensive enough to establish an understanding of the broader picture of migration drivers as well as decision-making factors, nor does the data particularly focus on movements towards Europe.”²⁰

¹⁵ Lisa Schlein, “IOM: Libya Struggling With High Numbers of Migrants in Detention,” Voice of America, 11 August 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/world-news/middle-east-dont-use/iom-libya-struggling-high-numbers-migrants-detention>.

¹⁶ Yermi Brenner, Roberto Forin, Bram Frouw, “The ‘Shift’ to the Western Mediterranean Migration Route: Myth or Reality?” Mixed Migration Center, 22 August 2018, <http://www.mixedmigration.org/articles/shift-to-the-western-mediterranean-migration-route/>.

¹⁷ Peter Tinti and Tom Westcott, “The Niger-Libya Corridor: Smugglers’ Perspectives,” Institute for Security Studies, November 2016, pp. 4-6, https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/paper299_2.pdf. See also Floor El Kamouni-Janssen, “‘Only God Can Stop the Smugglers’: Understanding Human Smuggling Networks in Libya,” Clingendael, February 2017, pp. 10-12, https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/only_god_can_stop_the_smugglers.pdf.

¹⁸ UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting, “Mixed Migration Trends in Libya,” pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ Clare Cummings, Julia Pacitto, Diletta Lauro, and Marta Foresti, “Why People Move: Understanding the Drivers and Trends of Migration to Europe,” Overseas Development Institute, December 2015, p. 7, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10157.pdf>.

²⁰ IOM, “Enabling a Better Understanding,” p. 21.

Nevertheless, the literature suggests three broad ways of thinking about patterns in irregular migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe. First, some authors suggest that irregular migration reflects migrants' holistic and context-specific desires for a better life. Second, some analysts suggest that irregular migration is primarily economic. Third, some publications focus on the micro-demographic factors driving migration, meaning that particular types of individuals are more likely to migrate than others.

PERSPECTIVE ONE: MIGRATION IS FOR A HOLISTICALLY BETTER LIFE

Sub-Saharan African migrants and asylum-seekers seldom move due to “a single variable.” Their motivations include “socio-economic status, conflict, family issues, insecurity and the desire to improve one’s life,” or a desire to get out of Libya.²¹ Push factors such as poverty and food insecurity intersect in complicated ways with “individual preferences (mediated by age, gender, ethnicity, aspirations etc.).”²² For example, one study finds that “it is a mix of economic as well as forced drivers that lead Nigerian nationals to leave their country.”²³ The authors add, “Migrants rarely name a single reason or trigger why they migrate since drivers often change and evolve en route.”²⁴

Mixed motivations are prominent in literature on the Horn of Africa. As one study underlines, “Sometimes, people who flee their country of origin for political reasons are forced to migrate again because of economic factors.”²⁵ Some authors argue that economic factors have been overstated in the literature on migration from the Horn: “Conflict, human rights abuses and concerns about the safety and security of family members were the primary drivers of migration from countries of origin.”²⁶ Yet other authors write that within the Horn, “The vast majority of movement is undertaken for reasons related more to choice than force – people moving to take advantage of improved job prospects or educational opportunities, for instance, or as part of a livelihood strategy that is inherently mobile, such as pastoralism.”²⁷ Other analysts suggest that many migrants have intertwined economic and political motivations: “Displacement and onward migration in the Horn of Africa region is underpinned by a complex, and often inter-related, set of factors including political repression, armed conflict, poor governance, environmental degradation and food insecurity, climatic

²¹ Gabriella Sanchez, Rezart Hoxhaj, Sabrina Nardin, Andrew Geddes, Luigi Achilli, and Rezart Sona Kalantaryan, “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy, with a Particular Focus on Online and Social Media,” European Commission Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, January 2018, p. 7, <http://missingchildreurope.eu/Portals/0/Docs/publication%20hub/Comm%20channels%20used%20by%20migrants%20in%20Italy.en.pdf>.

²² Anna Knoll, Francesco Rampa, Carmen Torres, Paulina Bizzotto Molina and Noemi Cascone, “The Nexus Between Food and Nutrition Security, and Migration: Clarifying the Debate and Charting a Way Forward,” European Centre for Development Policy Management, May 2017, p. 8, <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/DP212-Food-Nutrition-Security-Migration-May-2017.pdf>.

²³ International Organization for Migration (IOM), “Enabling a Better Understanding of Migration Flows and Its Root Causes from Nigeria towards Europe,” April 2017, p. 19, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Desk%20Review%20Report%20-%20NIGERIA%20-%20DP.1635%20-%20MinBuZa%20%2803%29.pdf>.

²⁴ IOM, “Enabling a Better Understanding,” p. 19.

²⁵ Patryk Kugiel, “The Refugee Crisis in Europe: True Causes, False Solutions,” *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, No. 4 (October 2016), pp. 46-47.

²⁶ Crawley and Blitz, “Common Agenda or Europe’s Agenda?” p. 8.

²⁷ EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa Research & Evidence Facility, “Migration and Conflict in the Horn of Africa: A Desk Review and Proposal for Research,” 15 March 2017, p. 1, <https://www.soas.ac.uk/ref-hornresearch/research-papers/file120035.pdf>.

disasters including droughts and floods, and lack of economic opportunities.”²⁸ For example, Eritreans have often decided “to leave their country for various reasons, but the main drivers are endemic poverty, a lack of livelihood opportunities, and limited political freedoms.”²⁹ Many migrants, especially from the Horn, are fleeing situations that they seem to see as holistically bad, in both a political and an economic sense. As one survey of migrants noted, “All of them hoped for freedom and a better life.”³⁰ It is possible that with thawing Ethiopian-Eritrean relations, there may be a political opening of sorts in Eritrea – but longtime President Isaias Afwerki continues to keep a tight grip on the country.

A 2018 publication by NOI Polls highlights economic drivers for Nigerian migrants. Approximately 84% cited economic reasons as the cause of irregular migration to Europe.³¹ Interestingly, however, the same report adds, “There is perceived injustice and discrimination meted towards young people by the Nigerian government”;³² the report does not elaborate on why young Nigerians feel this way, but this notion points to the conclusion that it is a combination of economic aspirations and local frustrations/discrimination that drives some youth migration. Based on the literature, one could argue that economic motivations are driving much migration, but one could equally add that economic motivations never exist in isolation from other considerations. As several authors comment, “The reasons why asylum-seekers and economic migrants choose to make the dangerous journey to Europe are often similar and a person may fit both of these categories at the same time.”³³

PERSPECTIVE TWO: MIGRATION IS PRIMARILY ECONOMIC

African migrants through Libya overwhelmingly report economic motivations to survey researchers, especially migrants from West Africa. For example, the Mixed Migration Centre interviewed 3,095 refugees and migrants in 2018, including 2,167 individuals from West Africa, 592 from East Africa, and 334 from Central Africa. Of the total sample, 93% cited economic factors, whereas only 13% cited concerns about political rights and only 6% cited violence. Approximately 95% of West African respondents evoked economic motivations, as did approximately 85% of East African respondents and 89% of Central African respondents. Mentioning violence as a motivation was highest among Central African respondents (22%) and much lower among West African respondents (3%) and East African respondents (6%). The figures for lack of rights are roughly similar: 22% of Central Africans cited that issue, compared with only 15% of West Africans and 4% of East Africans.³⁴

A 2017 study asked a sample of 140 refugees and migrants in southern Libya, including both Africans and non-Africans, about what conditions in their home countries had prompted their migration: the top five responses were the economic situation (69%), lack of job opportunities (59%), the security

²⁸ Heaven Crawley and Brad Blitz, “Common Agenda or Europe’s Agenda? International Protection, Human Rights and Migration from the Horn of Africa,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, published online 28 May 2018, p. 2, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/mmrp/outputs/common_agenda_or_europe_s_agenda.pdf.

²⁹ Christopher Horwood and Kate Hooper, “Protection on the Move: Eritrean Refugee Flows through the Greater Horn of Africa,” Migration Policy Institute, September 2016, p. 4, available at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/protection-move-eritrean-refugee-flows-through-greater-horn-africa>.

³⁰ UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting, “Mixed Migration Trends in Libya,” p. 62.

³¹ NOI Polls, “Study on Irregular Migration to Europe: Understanding the Motivations for Irregular Migration to Europe via Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea,” January 2018, p. 26.

³² NOI Polls, “Study on Irregular Migration to Europe,” p. 27.

³³ Cummings et al., “Why People Move,” p. 5.

³⁴ Mixed Migration Centre, “MMC North Africa 4Mi Snapshot: What Drives Migrants and Refugees to and through Libya?” 15 July 2019, pp. 1-3, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/070_snapshot_na.pdf.

situation (49%), oppression (23%), and the general situation (17%).³⁵ The same study found that West and Central African migrants tended to foreground economic motivations, whereas East African migrants tended to cite both economic and political motivations, including flight from persecution and conflict.³⁶

Migrants' economic motivations also figure heavily in a July 2018 paper by Matthew Kirwin and Jessica Anderson. Surveying aspiring migrants in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal in 2016-2017, as well as conducting focus groups with migrants in Niger in 2016, the authors found aspiring migrants foregrounded economic motivations. For example, of Nigerians who said they would migrate if given the opportunity, 51% wanted jobs and better pay, followed by 23% percent who wanted to send money home. Only 4% cited insecurity, only 15% mentioned education, and only 4% evoked personal freedom. The percentages of those citing jobs as the primary motivation were 47% for Cote d'Ivoire, 32% in Mali, and 35% in Senegal, while the percentages of those citing a desire to send money home were 39% in Cote d'Ivoire, 46% in Mali, and 52% in Senegal.³⁷

Economic motivations appear with both men and women. Human Rights Watch has indicated that Nigerian women who are victims of sex trafficking – both within Nigeria and from Niger through Libya into Europe – were often initially motivated by a desire for good jobs, and then were tricked by traffickers. In 2019, “Most women and girls interviewed by Human Rights Watch said they were trafficked by people they know, who prey on their desperation, making false promises of paid employment, professional training, and education.”³⁸ Another review adds, “Unfortunately, even though the trend is going towards more independence for women in the migration process, long-established and exploitative female-specific forms of migration persist, including trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, the commercialization of domestic workers, as well as the organization of women for marriage.”³⁹ Strikingly, the same review notes, “Literature on sex trafficking of Nigerian women suggests that victims of trafficking often have more knowledge of asylum systems in Europe than the average irregular migrant. The smugglers and traffickers generally make sure that the Nigerian women involved in their network apply for asylum as soon as they arrive in Europe... The migration law and asylum procedures are extremely well known to the traffickers who are mostly also Nigerian migrants that arrived in Europe as victims of human trafficking themselves.”⁴⁰ Here, the particularities of trafficking networks come into play; smugglers are not merely responsible for transporting these women but rather the smugglers are integrated into networks that recruit, traffic, and then exploit the women. Systems of control, meanwhile, have evolved to take advantage of, rather than avoid, the asylum system.

PERSPECTIVE THREE: MIGRANTS' INDIVIDUAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS SHAPE MOTIVATIONS

Another view found in the literature, and one that is compatible with either of the above-mentioned perspectives, asserts that migrants' motivations reflect particularities of their nationality and demography. The preceding sections already gave an inkling of this notion, in that some of the

³⁵ UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting, “Mixed Migration Trends in Libya,” p. 64.

³⁶ UNHCR, IMPACT, and Altai Consulting, “Mixed Migration Trends in Libya,” pp. 2-3.

³⁷ Matthew Kirwin and Jessica Anderson, “Identifying the Factors Driving West African Migration,” OECD, July 2018, p. 12, <http://www.oecd.org/swac/publications/2018-wap-17-identifying-the-factors-driving-west-african-migration.pdf>.

³⁸ Human Rights Watch, “‘You Pray for Death’: Trafficking of Women and Girls in Nigeria,” 27 August 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/08/27/you-pray-death/trafficking-women-and-girls-nigeria>.

³⁹ IOM, “Enabling a Better Understanding,” p. 14.

⁴⁰ IOM, “Enabling a Better Understanding,” pp. 32-33.

reports cited above distinguish between West Africa as a source of economic migrants and East Africa as a source of political and economic migrants (although such dichotomies are probably too simplistic). Even within West Africa, there is variation by nationality. One survey of 1,432 migrants and refugees in Libya states, “Economic marginalization was claimed as the main driver of migration by respondents from Chad (49%) and Nigeria (46%). On the contrary, migrants/refugees originating from Niger and Mali reported that their decision to migrate was mainly induced by climate-related shocks.”⁴¹ Climate-related shocks, however, can also be understood as at least partly economic, given their impact on livelihoods and economic marginalization.

Even within a single nationality, the demographic characteristics of migrants inform their motivations. Migrants seeking to reach Europe tend to be relatively young, are mostly male, are often single, and are often childless. In 2018 the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) interviewed 2,184 migrants and refugees in the Sahel, coming from eighteen different countries in West and Central Africa. The average age of these interviewees was 29, 66% of the sample was male, 66% of respondents were single, and over half had no children.⁴² The respondents overwhelmingly (93% of men and 80% of women) cited economic reasons for their migration, especially a lack of income and/or unemployment.⁴³ Just 43% said they had reached the decision to migrate on their own.⁴⁴ The picture emerges of a “typical migrant” who is a man who sees the opportunity (as a young, single, childless person) and the need (because of family pressure or difficult personal circumstances) to make the arduous journey to Europe in hopes of making more money (either to lead a better life as an individual or to send it home). As a different study’s authors write, “Migration is often part of a household’s risk management and income diversification strategy.”⁴⁵

Many migrants, meanwhile, seem not to be the poorest of the poor but rather people with some means. One report states, “The political expectation that development will halt irregular migration is not evidence-based. Indeed, in low-income and lower middle-income countries, economic development increases migration.” The same report quotes an anonymous INGO official working in Senegal who said, “You need a minimum of 1 million francs CFA – about 1500€ – to take the dangerous trip to Europe. We have never heard anyone in the villages where we help diagnose malnutrition talk about migrating to Europe.”⁴⁶ Mercy Corps’ research in Afghanistan and Somalia has reached a parallel conclusion, finding that “youth were often rooted due to limited resources, making it difficult to migrate, rather than a willful desire to remain in their place of residence or origin.”⁴⁷ Extreme poverty can trap people, in other words, while development can enable migration; it is also notable that, as one Food and Agriculture Organization document states, “Internal migrants [within Africa] mostly originate from rural areas, while international migrants mainly come from urban areas.” The same document further states that “households with migrants – especially with international migrants – are wealthier than households without migrants,” but goes on to say that it

⁴¹ World Food Programme (WFP), “The Migration Pulse: Sahelian migrants and refugees in Libya,” March 2019, p. 1, <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000103130/download/>.

⁴² Mixed Migration Centre, “MMC WEST AFRICA - 4Mi Snapshot - September 2018: Profiles and Reasons of Departure of Refugees and Migrants from West Africa,” September 2018, p. 1, <http://www.mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/tr-wa-1809.pdf>.

⁴³ Mixed Migration Centre, “MMC WEST AFRICA - 4Mi Snapshot - September 2018,” p. 2.

⁴⁴ Mixed Migration Centre, “MMC WEST AFRICA - 4Mi Snapshot - September 2018,” p. 3.

⁴⁵ Knoll et al., “The Nexus Between Food and Nutrition Security, and Migration,” p. 6.

⁴⁶ Global Health Advocates, “Misplaced Trust: Diverting EU Aid to Stop Migration – The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa,” September 2017, p. 10

http://www.ghadvocates.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Misplaced-Trust_FINAL-VERSION.pdf.

⁴⁷ Mercy Corps and Samuel Hall, “Driven to Leave: Aid and Migration: Assessing Evidence from Somalia & Afghanistan,” August 2018, p. 2, https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/NWO%20migration%20policy%20brief_20180817.pdf.

is unclear whether this household wealth is a cause of migration or an effect of migrants' remittances.⁴⁸ As two other authors write, "The idea that much African migration is essentially driven by poverty ignores evidence that demographic and economic transitions and 'development' in poor countries are generally associated with increasing rather than decreasing levels of mobility and migration and that the relation between development and migration is fundamentally non-linear."⁴⁹ Extreme poverty can consume people's attention in a day-to-day quest for survival, inhibiting the types of political engagement and economic exploration that lead some people to migrate; extreme poverty can also preclude the planning, saving, and community investment that enable many migrants' journeys.

In short, the "typical migrant" may not be merely a young, childless man, but also a young man from an area with some degree of development. Aspiring migrants also need access to social networks that can facilitate their journeys: "The decision about where to travel on to depends not only on the options made available by smugglers and others facilitating journeys, but also on family members and friends living elsewhere and on actual and perceived opportunities to access rights and work."⁵⁰ The desperately poor may actually be less likely to encounter such networks than are individuals coming from slightly better circumstances.

⁴⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Evidence on Internal and International Migration Patterns in Selected African Countries," 2017, p. 1, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7468e.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Flahaux and De Haas, "African Migration."

⁵⁰ Crawley and Blitz, "Common Agenda or Europe's Agenda?" p. 11.

INFORMATION, DECISION-MAKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION: LEARNING FROM EVIDENCE

The decision to migrate is determined by multiple variables, ranging from material and non-material incentives, as the previous section suggests. While economic incentives are critical, information also influences migrant calculations. The role of information – and the relationship between migrants and information sources – is complex, and the literature contains divergent perspectives on how information shapes migrant decision-making.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ECONOMIC INCENTIVES VERSUS OTHER INCENTIVES?

Economic incentives at the destination loom large in the decision to migrate, but – as noted above – much of the literature indicates that migrants tend to think holistically about a better life, rather than about a narrow set of purely economic incentives. Even as migrants hope for economic well-being, economic issues are bound up with imagining other transformations.

Some incentives at the point of arrival are essentially economic, but act in combination with other factors to create a pull. “Major pull factors, influencing migrants’ decisions to travel to Europe rather than other places, include geography, migration infrastructure, and the generous and incoherent EU asylum system.”⁵¹ Similarly, in terms of why Eritreans sought to reach Europe, several analysts note three factors: the instability and relatively inhospitable atmosphere (including in an economic sense) of the countries near Eritrea; migrants’ hope (fostered by diaspora and social media) that they will receive asylum; and the desire to benefit from the services that the EU offers to refugees.⁵² This issue is a point of disagreement in the literature, however. One report states, “Evidence suggests that the importance of different countries’ welfare and asylum support systems as a pull factor for migration is weak.”⁵³ One reasonable conclusion to draw from the literature might be that aspiring migrants’ knowledge of welfare and asylum systems varies widely, and that many migrants – as discussed above – simply want a better life and expect to fill in the details after their arrival.

HOW IMPORTANT IS INFORMATION ABOUT THE RISKS OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN DECISION TO MIGRATE?

The spread of information appears to be a key factor in increasing migration to Europe, although “information” is not just raw data but also the complex images and narratives that aspiring migrants both receive and transmit. As one author comments, “Globalization, the arrival of modern communication and transport, TV and the internet have made the differences [between haves and have-nots] obvious, and raised the aspirations and expectations of people in developing countries. Easy access to information made potential migrants more aware of their rights, and of EU regulations, and facilitated access to information about destination countries, such as mode of transport, routes, and prices.”⁵⁴ Two authors write, “Improved access to information and exposure to other (wealthy and/or ‘Western’) lifestyles conveyed through education, media and advertising tend to change people’s perceptions of the ‘good life’ alongside increasing material aspirations and a growing appetite for consumer goods.”⁵⁵ The same authors continue, “The crux is that when ‘development’ occurs in poor and marginal countries and areas, aspirations and capabilities to

⁵¹ Kugiel, “The Refugee Crisis in Europe,” p. 42.

⁵² Horwood and Hooper, “Protection on the Move,” p. 8.

⁵³ Cummings et al., “Why People Move,” p. 26. The study referenced is Vaughan Robinson and Jeremy Segrott, “Understanding the decision-making of asylum seekers,” Home Office Research Study No. 243, 2002.

⁵⁴ Kugiel, “The Refugee Crisis in Europe,” pp. 50-51.

⁵⁵ Flahaux and De Haas, “African Migration.”

migrate tend to increase simultaneously, explaining the paradoxical phenomenon of development driven emigration booms.”⁵⁶

Many African migrants understand that migration will be hard. For example, “although many Senegalese migrants arrive in Europe misinformed and ill-prepared, a large number of migrants, possibly even the majority, are aware of and ready for the difficult conditions they may face in Europe, underlining their determination to migrate.”⁵⁷ Kirwin and Anderson found that “very few [respondents] in any [West African] country indicated they were staying because the trip is too dangerous.”⁵⁸ This finding is particularly relevant for the present paper; much of the literature reviewed points to a gap between policymakers’ assumptions about migrants and migrants’ actual thought processes. Migrants, aspiring migrants, and even people who have decided not to migrate all seem to rate the physical dangers of the journey as a secondary rather than primary concern in their decision-making.

How migrants receive and process information depends largely on social networks. Migration networks include organized criminals, who shape the flows of information that aspiring migrants receive. One report argues, “Irregular migration from the Horn of Africa is dominated by highly integrated networks of transnational organized criminal groups. Coordinated by kingpins based chiefly in Libya and the Horn of Africa, these networks ‘recruit’ their clients via schools, the Internet and word of mouth.”⁵⁹ Another report stresses the hegemony of smuggling networks along East African routes: “All interviewed [East Africa] refugees and migrants moved across Libya within a closed smuggling network with no freedom of movement during their entire time in the country.”⁶⁰ Smuggling networks are also crucial, though perhaps less predatory, along West African migration routes. There, one desk review states, “Social networks can overlap with smuggling networks but this is not always the case...Social connections can change along the journey depending on their utility in a given context.”⁶¹

Although smugglers have been vilified, often appropriately, in much reporting on the migration crisis, there are complex information exchanges between smugglers and migrants. One study argues that “migrants do not perceive interactions with smugglers as being inherently negative. While many respondents describe tension and mistreatment, most were aware of the conditions related to clandestine journeys as a result of the prior legs of their migratory journeys, primarily to North Africa and the Middle East.”⁶² Another study found “that human smugglers respond to long-term economic incentives”⁶³ – in other words, the desire to maintain a reputation for trustworthiness in the hopes of getting more clients. The authors continue, “We observe a binding constraint on the sea smuggler at the final step of the journey: crossing the Mediterranean. Sea conditions are strongly correlated with death and disappearance. Smugglers aware of their long-term economic incentives

⁵⁶ Flahaux and De Haas, “African Migration.”

⁵⁷ Cummings et al., “Why People Move,” p. 31.

⁵⁸ Kirwin and Anderson, “Identifying the Factors Driving West African Migration,” p. 10. The authors later add, “Participants were well aware of the risks of their journey, but also knew of people who had succeeded” (p. 12).

⁵⁹ Sahar Research, “Human Trafficking and Smuggling on the Horn of Africa-Central Mediterranean Route,” February 2016, p. 5. https://igad.int/attachments/1284_ISSP%20Sahan%20HST%20Report%20%2018ii2016%20FINAL%20FINAL.pdf.

⁶⁰ UNCHR, “Libya: From Hand to Hand – The Migratory Experience of East African Refugees and Migrants in Libya,” April 2019, p. 4, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/impact_lby_report_from_hand_to_hand_april_2019.pdf.

⁶¹ IOM, “Enabling a Better Understanding,” p. 31.

⁶² Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 7.

⁶³ Kara Camarena, Sarah Claudy, and Austin Wright, “Human Smuggling under Risk: Evidence from the Mediterranean,” July 2018, p. 1. https://thepearsoninstitute.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Migration_in_Med%20-%20Camarena%2C%20Claudy%2C%20Wright_0.pdf.

should and, as we document, do strategically avoid setting migrants adrift under risky conditions.”⁶⁴ Smugglers try to avoid setting migrants adrift, because it will cost them business.

Other accounts contradict this depiction: one study states that many migrants who cross the Mediterranean are forced to do so.⁶⁵ The same report says that not all smugglers within Libya are alike: “Some are part of top-down or ‘mafia-type’ smuggling organizations, whereas others operate as ‘freelancers’ or ‘occasional’ smugglers in more horizontally oriented networks.” Nevertheless, the authors state, “The use of excessive violence against migrants and the necessity for smugglers to bear arms and buy protection from other (armed) groups has become common practice at different stages of the journey and in all of Libya’s smuggling hubs along the western route.”⁶⁶ One recent report argues that the crackdown on migration since 2015-2016 has made smuggling networks in the Sahara more criminal and more coercive: “Smugglers who continue their operations have resorted to more covert activities. This has rendered the operations of those still active riskier but also increased the overlap between human smuggling and abuse of migrants, as well as between low-level drug trafficking and other more serious criminal activity. In Libya, for instance, parts of the human-smuggling economy have shifted to the extortion of migrants through torture to compensate for reduced migration and lost revenues.”⁶⁷ When smugglers view migrants as pawns rather than customers, they tend to coerce and mislead them. This atmosphere makes it hard for outsiders to determine who is a migrant, a refugee, or a victim of trafficking.⁶⁸ The question of how migrants get information is closely related to the question of who counts as a migrant in the first place.

Beyond smugglers, diasporas also play a key role in the spread of information and narratives.⁶⁹ One review on the topic of Nigerian migration concluded that “the decision-making process regarding the choice of destination country is believed to be contingent, primarily, on the information that is accessible through personal networks, especially information provided by the Nigerian diaspora. It was reported that Nigerian nationals that had family members or friends living in Europe, were more likely to have a specific destination country in mind (59%), in contrast to compatriots that did not have family or friends in Europe.”⁷⁰ Not all diaspora communities or “settled migrants,” however, encourage further migration from their home countries: “Macro-level developments, such as declining work opportunities, more restrictive immigration policies and growing hostility in public opinion towards immigrants, have not just direct negative effects on migration rates, but also affect the willingness of settled migrants to support potential newcomers.”⁷¹

Some diasporas perpetuate misleading images of life in Europe, however. Discussing the Horn of Africa, one group of authors writes, “Messages sent back to youth who might aspire to travel ranges from stark warnings about the dangers that such journeys involve. However, there is also a troubling collection of narratives that extols the benefits of migration. Images of young people posing in front

⁶⁴ Camarena, Claudy, and Wright, “Human Smuggling under Risk,” p. 2.

⁶⁵ El Kamouni-Janssen, “‘Only God Can Stop the Smugglers,’” p. 19.

⁶⁶ El Kamouni-Janssen, “‘Only God Can Stop the Smugglers,’” p. 23.

⁶⁷ Mark Micallef, Raouf Farrah, Alexandre Bish, and Victor Tanner, “After the Storm: Organized Crime Across the Sahel-Sahara Following Upheaval in Libya and Mali,” Global Initiative, 2019, p. 90, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/After_the_storm_GI-TOC.pdf.

⁶⁸ Tuesday Reitano, Samantha McCormack, Mark Micallef and Mark Shaw, “Responding to the Human Trafficking-Migrant Smuggling Nexus, with a Focus on the Situation in Libya,” The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, July 2018, p. 8, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Reitano-McCormack-Trafficking-Smuggling-Nexus-in-Libya-July-2018.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Kugiel, “The Refugee Crisis in Europe,” pp. 51-52.

⁷⁰ IOM, “Enabling a Better Understanding,” p. 20.

⁷¹ Cummings et al., “‘Why People Move,’” p. 31.

of fancy sports cars or wearing the latest fashions, even if they themselves are living in conditions that are not as glamorous, help to perpetuate the idea that life far from home is much better and that whatever risk such a journey entails and is worth the odds.”⁷² Another study points out that “many times the information migrants obtain [from diasporas] is erroneous, outdated, and leads migrants to lose legal benefits or protection.”⁷³ Diasporas are crucial to many migrants’ consumption of information, but can also disseminate low quality information and/or have mixed attitudes toward migrants.

The role of social media is debated in the literature. Is communication through social media the most impactful, or is it offline person-to-person communication that matters, or the combination of the two? Some authors feel that the topic is too understudied to permit reliable conclusions.⁷⁴ Others argue that social media has had a significant effect, for example on Eritrean migrants: “Asylum seekers learn from informal information networks (such as social media or communication with the diaspora) that many countries in Europe will offer them almost guaranteed refugee status... Though social media is full of messages from Eritreans in the diaspora warning others of the dangers of the journey, these are rarely heeded.”⁷⁵

Another study focused on how migrants get information. The authors found a limited role for social media: “Face-to-face and/or verbal interactions are preferred over all other forms of communication when it comes to making decisions pertaining to secondary movements.”⁷⁶ The authors add, “While there is a degree of information sharing online, this does not include the information about secondary movements and/or their planning... Most images and messages involve representations that seek to convey a sense of the migrant living leisurely and comfortably in Europe, even if this is distant from the truth.”⁷⁷ The same report, however, found that real-life social networks contribute to some migrants’ difficulties: “While ethnic and kinship networks are the source of vast amounts of information, these often involve wrong, inaccurate or incomplete facts. The dissemination of these faulty details often led migrants not to receive the assistance they would otherwise qualify for; to fall prey to scams and robbers; or to face exploitative and/or abusive situations.”⁷⁸ A further limitation of social networks’ command over information concerns knowledge about Europe itself. “Migrants’ overall knowledge of Italy and Europe is, in fact, often limited and distorted.”⁷⁹ In other words, migrants already living in Europe have particular, situated experiences that may not prove accurate or helpful to migrants who arrive later; and just because settled migrants are on the scene does not mean they possess a full understanding of complex and shifting policies, domestic politics, travel routes, or other concerns relevant to new and aspiring migrants. Migrants may also feel pressure to represent their experiences positively in order to avoid embarrassment or because they remain indebted to friends and family members back home who helped finance their journeys. A separate 2015 study found that “online media are not (yet) substantially changing the social capital and

⁷² EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa Research & Evidence Facility, “Migration and Conflict in the Horn of Africa,” p. 48.

⁷³ Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 9.

⁷⁴ Cummings et al., “Why People Move,” p. 32.

⁷⁵ Horwood and Hooper, “Protection on the Move,” p. 8.

⁷⁶ Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 7.

⁷⁷ Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 7.

⁷⁸ Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 8.

⁷⁹ Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 7.

information that is available to prospective migrants. Claims about online media spurring international migration are thus premature.”⁸⁰

ARE DECISIONS TO MIGRATE SENSITIVE TO INTERVENTIONS THAT PROVIDE ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE RISKS OF THE JOURNEY?

European governments, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), IOM, as well as other organizations have run information campaigns since the early 1990s.⁸¹ Many of the recent information campaigns focus partly or wholly on Africa. Examples include Germany’s “Rumours about Germany,” Norway’s “Stricter Asylum Regulations in Norway,” and UNHCR’s “Telling the Real Story.”

UNHCR has articulated its theory of change for information campaigns as follows: “Information campaigns on irregular movements can help fill gaps in knowledge about realities in the desired country of destination and the dangers of irregular movements, such as the risk of trafficking, abuse and exploitation. Information alone will not deter irregular movements if the push factors are sufficiently serious, as individuals may embark on irregular travel regardless of the risks involved. Access to information, however, may enable individuals to make informed decisions, where they have a choice.”⁸² One of UNHCR’s Africa-centric information campaigns is “Telling the Real Story,” which launched in January 2016.⁸³ The project initially focused on Eritreans and Somalis but later broadened to include Nigerians. According to the official website, “The purpose of the “Telling the Real Story” platform is to allow Eritreans, Nigerians and Somalis who have made the journey to Europe share their stories about the journey and the situation in destination countries. “Telling the Real Story” does not attempt to address the reasons for people’s departure from their country of origin, but instead focuses on their experiences along the journey and in Europe.”⁸⁴ UNHCR has disseminated participants’ stories online and in refugee camps; UNHCR considers the project successful and states that “In camps where the campaign has taken root, youth groups compete to see who can discourage more minors from leaving... Departures of teenagers have dropped significantly, and elders report a shift in the mentality of minors surrounding this subject.”⁸⁵ Amid such notes of confidence, however, it is worth recalling one researcher’s caution that “there is a boundless social universe of mistrust – much of which will remain unknown to the researcher – requiring consideration when conducting research on refugees.”⁸⁶ The same caution applies to organizations attempting to evaluate the effectiveness of their own programs.

The analytical literature has been skeptical about the efficacy of information campaigns. One article interrogates the assumptions behind the campaigns, critiquing the following three assumptions. “First, that migrants lack information on migration; second, that their behavior is based on available information; and third, that information on migration is dark enough to discourage them from

⁸⁰ Rianne Dekker, Godfried Engbersen, and Marije Faber, “The Use of Online Media in Migration Networks,” *Population, Space and Place* 22 (2016): 539-551, p. 550.

⁸¹ Céline Nieuwenhuys and Antoine Pécoud, “Human Trafficking, Information Campaigns, and Strategies of Migration Control,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 50:12 (August 2007): 1674-1695, pp. 1677-1681.

⁸² UNHCR, “The 10 Point Plan in Action: 10 – Information Strategy,” version as of October 2019, p. 258, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/manuals/5846d48b7/10-point-plan-action-2016-update-chapter-10-information-strategy.html>.

⁸³ UNHCR, “The 10 Point Plan in Action: 10 – Information Strategy,” p. 267.

⁸⁴ See the website at <http://tellingtherealstory.org/about/>.

⁸⁵ UNHCR, “The 10 Point Plan in Action: 10 – Information Strategy,” p. 268.

⁸⁶ Tricia Hynes, “The Issue of ‘Trust’ or ‘Mistrust’ in Research with Refugees: Choices, Caveats and Considerations for Researchers,” UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, November 2003, p. 2, <https://www.unhcr.org/3fcb5cee1.pdf>.

leaving.”⁸⁷ The authors conclude, “This representation of the migration process and of the role of information therein run against a wide range of theories stressing the collective dynamics behind migration decisions.”⁸⁸

A 2011 article, based partly on fieldwork in Senegal, drew roughly similar conclusions about why information campaigns had limited impact. The authors write, “There are three reasons for the limited effect of awareness campaigns on discouraging migration. First, potential migrants may consider themselves better informed about the risks than those producing the campaigns. For instance, many prospective boat migrants are fishermen who are familiar with life at sea. Second, when potential migrants perceive that information campaigns are driven by vested interests, they are likely to dismiss them as biased propaganda. In Senegal, there is widespread awareness of European desires to persuade Africans to stay at home, and the campaigns are interpreted in this light. Many people also saw the Senegalese government as campaigning to preserve its own image; large-scale undocumented migration can be seen as an embarrassment that undermines the government. These cynical views of Europe and of African governments do not necessarily mean that the United States and USAID would be seen in the same light, but these views do suggest that any new migration-related programming could be seen in the context of existing cynicism about the motivations of all governments. Third, awareness campaigns may be irrelevant to prospective migrants who consider the attempt at changing their life to justify the risks involved.”⁸⁹ Another study argues, “People are often resistant to information they believe comes from a vested interest; they might think that their situation makes the journey worthwhile in spite of dangers, and they might trust their own knowledge and familiar sources of information more than messages from foreign governments. Moreover, the right persons might actually be difficult to reach through information campaigns that have been launched on traditional media platforms with a restricted audience.”⁹⁰ It is possible that campaigns with a more positive message could have a larger impact; in other words, positive messaging might concentrate on how funds that migrants gather for their journeys could be invested in local endeavors, or on prompting migrants to reconsider what their countries have to offer, like the UK-funded campaign in Nigeria called “Not for Sale”. Most of the well-established campaigns, though, have had messages concentrating on warning and scaring migrants.

Other authors point to a lack of evidence regarding efficacy. One study concludes, “There is extremely little evidence on the impact and effectiveness of these campaigns... Even where they are evaluated, showing a chain of causality between a specific program and reduced migration is difficult.”⁹¹ Another team notes that of existing information campaigns, “Few (if any) include a well-designed evaluation component.”⁹²

⁸⁷ Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, “Human Trafficking,” 1683.

⁸⁸ Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud, “Human Trafficking,” 1685.

⁸⁹ Jørgen Carling and María Hernández-Carretero, “Protecting Europe and Protecting Migrants? Strategies for Managing Unauthorised Migration from Africa,” *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 13 (February 2011): 42-58., p. 49.

⁹⁰ Jan-Paul Brekke and Kjersti Thorbjørnsrud, “Communicating Borders – Governments Deterring Asylum Seekers through Social Media Campaigns,” *Migration Studies*, 30 July 2018, p. 4, available at <https://academic.oup.com/migration/article/doi/10.1093/migration/mny027/5061473/>.

⁹¹ Evie Browne, “Impact of Communication Campaigns to Deter Irregular Migration,” GSDRC, 31 July 2015, p. 2, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0896840f0b652dd0001f4/HQ1248.pdf>.

⁹² Bernd Beber and Alexandra Scacco, “Can the Provision of Information or Economic Benefits Prevent Irregular Migration? Preliminary Design for a Field Experiment in Nigeria,” WZB Berlin Social Science Center, May 2018, p. 6, https://egap.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Scacco%2C%20Alex_designREVISED.pdf. See also Bernd Beber and Alexandra Scacco, “The Myth of the Misinformed Irregular Migrant? Insights from Nigeria,” WZB Berlin Social Science Center, 2018, p. 1.

Case studies of information campaigns largely confirm the impression that efficacy is difficult to establish. One study of Germany’s “Rumours about Germany” campaign argues, “These information campaigns are symbolic, fulfilling the need of policymakers to be seen to be doing something about ‘the migration crisis.’”⁹³ Two scholars examined Norway’s “Stricter asylum regulations in Norway” Facebook campaign, which the Ministry of Justice and Public Security launched in 2015. Among the findings was that the launch produced unintended consequences, including a stream of anti-migrant comments from far-right activists. Within less than a week, so many hateful and Islamophobic comments had been posted that the ministry decided to delete all incoming comments on the page.⁹⁴ The campaign then paid for the placement of posts targeting young Afghans, Ethiopians, and Eritreans. The authors write, “The target groups’ profile also included persons who, in addition to being male and from the target countries, had expressed interest in ‘travelling’ or ‘Europe’. These were seen as potential migrants to Norway...The goal was to reach potential migrants while they were on the move.”⁹⁵ Assessing the campaign’s impact is challenging, because its implementation coincided with major events such as the conclusion of the deal between the EU and Turkey on migration. As the authors note, “No reception study has been made of the Norwegian campaign. The actual impact on the target groups’ behavior is therefore unknown.”⁹⁶

The exception to the skepticism about information campaigns’ efficacy is a growing literature based on field experiments and surveys. These studies tend to suggest that information campaigns have a measurable impact on potential migrants’ decision-making, although the exact mechanisms and consequences of such impacts are debated. The first example is a 2018 working paper based on a “lab in the field experiment” in rural Gambia. The researchers found that young potential migrants have inaccurate impressions about key aspects of migration. “Respondents estimate at respectively 49% and 40% the probability of dying in route and of obtaining a [legal residence] permit. According to current estimates, the probability of dying is 20% while the probability of obtaining a permit is 33%.”⁹⁷ The authors concluded that accurate information affected potential migrants’ decision-making processes, but they note that while providing statistics about obtaining residency can discourage migration, providing statistics about dangers on route can actually increase willingness to migrate because routes are actually less dangerous than potential migrants expect – if some migrants are willing to make the journey even when they estimate the risk of death at nearly one in two, they are even more willing upon discovering that the risk is more like one in five.⁹⁸

A second example is a survey experiment project in Benin City, Nigeria, whose results have not yet been fully published. The authors found an essentially opposite result from the Gambian experiment. The authors write, “Potential migrants in this context are better informed about destination contexts than ubiquitous information campaigns assume, but are poorly informed about the journey itself.”⁹⁹ These results suggest that information campaigns can have an impact, just not necessarily in

⁹³ Ceri Oeppen, “Leaving Afghanistan! Are You Sure?” European Efforts to Deter Potential Migrants through Information Campaigns,” *Human Geography* 9:2 (2016), p. 2, <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/61744/1/Oeppen%202016%20Info%20campaigns%20paper%20pre-proofs.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Brekke and Thorbjørnsrud, “Communicating Borders,” pp. 10-11.

⁹⁵ Brekke and Thorbjørnsrud, “Communicating Borders,” p. 12.

⁹⁶ Brekke and Thorbjørnsrud, “Communicating Borders,” p. 19.

⁹⁷ Tijan Bah and Catia Batista, “Understanding Willingness to Migrate Illegally: Evidence from a Lab in the Field Experiment,” NOVAFRICA, November 2018, p. 10, <https://novafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/1803.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Bah and Batista, “Understanding Willingness to Migrate Illegally,” p. 1.

⁹⁹ Alex Scacco, “NOVAFRICA Seminar: “The Myth of the Misinformed Irregular Migrant? Insights from Nigeria,” NOVAFRICA, 23 November 2018, <https://novafrica.org/novafrica-seminar-the-myth-of-the-misinformed-irregular-migrant-insights-from-nigeria/>.

the way suggested by the Gambian experiment. Out of the literature reviewed, this is one of the rare publications that suggests migration decision-making would be highly sensitive to information campaigns focused on the dangers of the journey.

A third example is a survey conducted among approximately 7,300 students in ten secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria; students received different types of materials pertaining to the risks of human trafficking along migration routes. The authors argue, “Information campaigns are a powerful tool that could reduce information asymmetries provided by migration brokers and social media.”¹⁰⁰ The authors continue, “The randomized experiment evaluation showed that the campaign could reduce the risk of being a victim of human trafficking by more than 50 times. It could also reduce the desire to engage in irregular migration by more than 30 times and increased [sic] the decision to take necessary steps to avoid human traffickers and follow proper procedures for safe migration by more than 50 times.”¹⁰¹ Notably, the experiment involved oral presentations, leaflets, and videos, rather than generic social media campaigns. The authors recommend that information campaigns “should be implemented using appropriate channels, the right message, and tailored to a target group.”¹⁰²

In this vein, one report recommends turning from social media campaigns to more hybrid and targeted approaches. “Social media alone is not an effective way to communicate messages to migrants. Yet when combined with word-of-mouth communication from reliable sources, it strengthens the already existing ability of migrants to engage with information rationally and to make better informed choices.”¹⁰³ Another form of hybridization would be to combine social media with traditional media. The authors further argue that “strategies that rely on personalized, small group, word-of-mouth communication are the most reliable forms of disseminating information.”¹⁰⁴ The authors recommend leveraging diasporas as conduits for information: “A campaign that recognizes the strengths and contributions of the diaspora and provides it with clear, concise and accurate information that can be disseminated through short messages can have an impact on migrants’ ability to secure improved ways to travel, to become better informed about the limitations or restrictions they may find upon their arrival to the destination country, and assist them in making a decision concerning their journey.”¹⁰⁵

It is possible, finally, that information campaigns are undermined if migrants perceive the authors of those campaigns as hypocritical or disingenuous. One study compared the rhetoric and practices of EU migration policies, finding that “EU practice points to a strong preference for restricting migration.”¹⁰⁶ The same study found that “EU policies [are] however more securitized in practice than their much more reserved rhetoric;”¹⁰⁷ in other words, the EU talks a great deal about facilitating legal migration or promoting development, but in reality most of the emphasis is on interdiction. Given gaps between official rhetoric and reality, as well as the conflicting information

¹⁰⁰ Chinedu Obi, Fabio Bartolini, and Marijke D’Haese, “Evaluating the Impact of Information Campaign In Deterring Irregular Migration Intention Among Youths: A Randomised Control Experiment in Edo State, Nigeria,” a paper submitted for presentation at the AAAE Conference, Abuja, 2019 p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Obi, Bartolini, and D’Haese, “Evaluating the Impact of Information Campaign,” p. 3.

¹⁰² Obi, Bartolini, and D’Haese, “Evaluating the Impact of Information Campaign,” p. 1.

¹⁰³ Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 8.

¹⁰⁵ Sanchez et al., “A Study of the Communication Channels Used by Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Italy,” p. 9.

¹⁰⁶ Franzisca Zanker, “Managing or Restricting Movement? Diverging Approaches of African and European Migration Governance,” *Comparative Migration Studies* 7:17 (2019), p. 12, <https://comparativemigrationstudies.springeropen.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s40878-019-0115-9>.

¹⁰⁷ Zanker, “Managing or Restricting Movement?” p. 2.

migrants receive from different sources, migrants may be inclined to disbelieve official information campaigns.

WHAT IS THE STATE OF EXISTING LITERATURE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS DESIGNED TO REDUCE MIGRATION THROUGH THE SAHEL AND LIBYA?

The existing literature clusters around a few topics related to program interventions designed to discourage aspiring migrants from leaving home. The overwhelming focus in the literature is on EU migration policy, which analysts often assess negatively. One study says, “While the European powers have drawn up advanced plans to obstruct the transit migration via Niger to Libya and further on to Europe, its projects to address the root causes of migration in the Sahel and West Africa seem less developed and less creative.”¹⁰⁸ Some country-specific research warns that migration policies are destabilizing vulnerable areas and fraying relations between the EU and African governments. One study on Mali argues, “The previous discourse on the security-development nexus has shifted to a new development-migration-security nexus in an attempt to ‘externalize’ the crisis. The risk for the EU in the long term is to degrade the relationship with Mali, understood through its state, its citizens and the diaspora.”¹⁰⁹ The most critical voices argue that EU migration policy, viewed in a larger context that includes European arms sales to authoritarian governments as well as substantial profits that accrue to private companies involved in migration management, “is likely to exacerbate repression and limit democratic accountability and stoke the conflicts that will lead to more people being forced from their homes.”¹¹⁰

One of the most analyzed components of EU migration policy is the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), which was established in connection with the November 2015 EU-Africa migration summit in Valletta, Malta. With 4.5 billion euros in funding as of mid-2019, the EUTF is intended “to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management.” The Trust Fund operates programs in twenty-six countries divided into three priority regions: Sahel/Lake Chad, Horn of Africa, and North Africa.¹¹¹ As of 2018, the Trust Fund’s priorities were: “return and reintegration; refugees management; ... securitization of documents and civil registry; anti-trafficking measures; ... stabilization efforts; [and] actions supporting migrant dialogues.”¹¹²

At least a dozen papers have focused on the EUTF. Most analysts see some promise in the initiative. One study says, “The trust fund offers an opportunity to experiment and innovate, away from the restrictions of traditional development instruments. Such innovations with what is a comparatively small amount of development funding could – if used wisely – be an opportunity to learn lessons

¹⁰⁸ Rasmus Alenius Boserup and Luis Martinez, “Europe and the Sahel-Maghreb Crisis,” Danish Institute for International Studies, 2018, p. 50, <https://www.sciencespo.fr/cei/sites/sciencespo.fr/cei/files/europe-sahel-maghreb.pdf>.

¹⁰⁹ Elise Cuny, “The EU’s New Migration Partnership with Mali: Shifting towards a Risky Security- Migration-Development Nexus,” Department of EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, 2018, p. 20, http://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2018/08/diplomacy-paper_.pdf.

¹¹⁰ Mark Akkerman, “Expanding the Fortress: The Policies, the Profiteers and the People Shaped by EU’s Border Externalisation Programme,” Transnational Institute, May 2018, p. 5 https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/expanding_the_fortress_-_1.6_may_11.pdf.

¹¹¹ EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, “The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa,” 9 July 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/euetfa/files/facsheet_eutf_generic_long_online_publication_09.07.19.pdf. See also European Commission, “The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa,” version as of 5 October 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/africa/eu-emergency-trust-fund-africa_en.

¹¹² EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, “The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa.”

about what works, which can inform the reform of traditional EU development instruments and practices.”¹¹³ Yet most reports criticize the EUTF’s implementation. Global Health Advocates calls the EUTF “a political instrument designed to respond to a political emergency in Europe rather than development needs in partner countries.”¹¹⁴ Oxfam writes, “The instrument’s flexible nature has generated both opportunities and risks, and lacks sufficient checks and balances to ensure that European interests do not take precedence over the needs of the people that aid is intended to help.”¹¹⁵ An analysis for the Heinrich Böll Stiftung similarly concluded, “The objectives agreed upon in Valletta have in practice not been supported equally ... Just 1% has actually been spent on advancing legal migration and mobility possibilities – which is very much in the interests of the African countries, due to the scale of remittances from Europe.”¹¹⁶ An analysis by SWP Berlin also highlights dynamics of power in the EUTF’s design and execution: “Despite its broad objectives, statements by European leaders have repeatedly underlined that the main purpose of the EUTF is to secure the cooperation of third countries in reducing refugee flows and irregular migration and taking back irregular migrants.”¹¹⁷ In this vein, oversight has been a problem, especially when it comes to “member states exploiting the Trust Fund structure to fund existing bilateral projects or to channel new projects directly to their own implementation organizations.”¹¹⁸ Another author writes, “There is no clear evidence that the type of development investments that the trust fund is making will actually prevent irregular migration. Indeed, many of the trust fund’s projects are similar to the kinds of investments that have long been made under traditional development instruments – with far more financing and on a greater scale – and yet have not appeared to reduce migration.”¹¹⁹

Authors have also argued that the EUTF accords little decision making power to African states. In an analysis for the German Development Institute, Clare Castillejo argues “that the EUTF is far removed from aid-effectiveness principles of ownership, partnership or alignment, and hence risks overlooking local priorities, knowledge and buy-in.”¹²⁰ Castillejo contends that there were “serious flaws with the process for identifying and selecting projects and argues that this results in a choice of projects and implementers that is not necessarily based on the best fit for either the trust fund’s goals or the local context and needs, but instead is based frequently on the effectiveness of member states in lobbying for funds.”¹²¹ Another author writes, “The vast majority of projects that have been selected are being implemented by European member states, civil society or private organizations.”¹²² In some cases, African governments have publicly expressed dismay about these dynamics: “The Ethiopian government complained that the measures funded by the Trust Fund had

¹¹³ Clare Castillejo, “The European Union Trust Fund for Africa: A Glimpse of the Future for EU Development Cooperation,” German Development Institute, 2016, p. 28, https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/DP_22.2016.neu.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Global Health Advocates, “Misplaced Trust,” p. 4.

¹¹⁵ Elise Kervyn and Raphael Shilhav, “An Emergency for Whom? The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa – Migratory Routes and Development Aid in Africa,” Oxfam, November 2017, cover page, https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp-emergency-for-whom-eutf-africa-migration-151117-en_1.pdf.

¹¹⁶ Inken Bartels, “Money against Migration: The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa,” Heinrich Böll Foundation, March 2019, p. 3, https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/money_against_migration.pdf?dimension1=division_af.

¹¹⁷ David Kipp, “From Exception to Rule – the EU Trust Fund for Africa,” German Institute for International and Security Affairs, December 2018, p. 11, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2018RP13_kpp.pdf. See also Therese Mager, “The Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: Examining Methods and Motives in the EU’s External Migration Agenda,” United Nations University, 2018, <http://cris.unu.edu/sites/cris.unu.edu/files/UNU-CRIS%20Policy%20Brief%202018-2.pdf>.

¹¹⁸ Kipp, “From Exception to Rule,” p. 15.

¹¹⁹ Castillejo, “The European Union Trust Fund for Africa,” p. 5.

¹²⁰ Castillejo, “The European Union Trust Fund for Africa,” p. 1.

¹²¹ Castillejo, “The European Union Trust Fund for Africa,” p. 1.

¹²² Castillejo, “The European Union Trust Fund for Africa,” p. 14.

little effect, and instead European demands for better cooperation in repatriating Ethiopian citizens dominated the process.”¹²³

Beyond the EUTF, the literature becomes much more diffuse. There is a wide literature on the security aspects of EU migration policy, but much of that literature is only tangentially relevant to this review. A final note is that, arguably, information campaigns are a relatively low priority within the overall EU policy framework for managing migration. For example, the European Commission’s March 2019 “Progress report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration” included just one brief reference to information campaigns amid much more sustained discussion of other efforts; for the EU, information campaigns are one piece of “combatting smuggling networks,”¹²⁴ which is itself just one piece of “tackling the drivers of irregular migration,” one of four pillars in the EU’s approach. Other than the literature cited throughout the responses to the previous questions, most of the literature focuses on elements of policy other than information campaigns. This review, meanwhile, did not uncover literature on U.S. efforts to counter migration from sub-Saharan Africa. In general, academic literature has not yet fully caught up with the rapid pace of changes in migration and migration policy since 2015.

WHAT QUESTIONS REMAIN UNANSWERED, AND WHAT ARE SOME TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN RIGOROUSLY TESTED?

Despite the emerging literature on field experiments with potential migrants, it still appears that information campaigns’ efficacy has not been rigorously tested. There is room for careful evaluations of past and existing campaigns, as well as more room for field experiments (provided that ethical standards are carefully observed). More complex testing of information campaigns could involve efforts to replicate, tweak, or build on the above-mentioned survey of secondary students in Edo State and the above-mentioned field experiment in Gambia: in other words, applying combinations of different media, testing the efficacy of different kinds of messages, combining information campaigns with diaspora involvement, and so forth.

CONCLUSIONS

From the literature, we draw the following conclusions for USAID programming.

- Generic social media campaigns are probably not a very efficient use of time and funds. The limited literature available indicates when information campaigns are effective, it is because they are tailored to specific sub-groups who can make use of multiple channels of communication. Blanketing social media with messages, or even tailoring social media to reach specific kinds of online audiences, does not yield results. Campaign tailoring seems to need to go beyond just social media to encompass the multiple ways that any given sub-group receives and processes information.
- Attempts to frighten migrants by emphasizing the possibility of dying en route is not likely to be effective. Literature suggests migrants and would-be migrants are well aware of the dangers of the journey. Even if efforts exaggerate those dangers, such scare campaigns risk backfiring, particularly if they inadvertently give migrants a sense that the route is *less* dangerous than they originally thought. It may be more effective, therefore, to focus on the difficulties migrants face within Europe, and the non-lethal dangers migrants face in route, especially trafficking risks.

¹²³ Kipp, “From Exception to Rule,” p. 20.

¹²⁴ European Commission, “Progress Report on the Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration,” p. 10.

- Information campaigns can be undermined by elements of policy and by perceived hypocrisy. Some literature indicates that would-be migrants already have a keen sense of the motivations behind information campaigns, and are alert for signs of hypocrisy in policy and programming.
- Diasporas play context-specific roles in conveying information to migrants. Indeed, the literature suggests that there is no one-size-fits-all way to understand the role of Diasporas in either driving, or in some circumstances, discouraging migration. In terms of tailoring campaigns, then, any attempts to work with (or around) Diasporas should take into account their particular circumstances and their particular relationships with their home countries.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

In summary, information campaigns that stand the highest chance of success will likely have the following features: (a) target would-be migrants instead of migrants en route; (b) prioritize the dissemination of messages through person-to-person social networks, both online and offline, rather than through generic social media appeals; (c) focus on disseminating information about hardships within Europe rather than en route; (d) include a variety of voices, platforms, and messages; and (e) not make simplistic promises about a better life in one's own country, nor attempt to misrepresent Europe's level of openness to legal migration. Even within these guidelines, however, successful campaigns would also likely have to be customized according to the countries and regions targeted and be effectively paired with thoughtful development initiatives that take into account long-term community needs, the potentially destructive impacts of existing migration policies, and the ways that increasing levels of development can actually spur migration.

Finally, there appears to be room for information campaigns more specifically focused on women in order to highlight risks of human trafficking. Here, the most effective approach would likely involve avoiding discouraging migration generally, and instead alerting women to the potential dangers of human trafficking. This would entail warning women about the potential signs that someone or some employment offer is related to trafficking rather than legitimate employment. With female victims of trafficking who are already committed to seeking work in Europe, one critical moment appears to be the period between reaching a decision to migrate and linking up with a particular trafficking network. Reaching women during this period in their home countries could be particularly effective.

Above all, information campaigns should acknowledge that migrants are likely very aware of the dangers of the migration journey to Europe. Thus, the challenge of information campaigns is to come up with a compelling argument against what is oftentimes a carefully considered and life-changing decision. It is rare that a migrant would cross the Sahara or the Mediterranean on a whim. Many migrants travel not just to help themselves but to help their most beloved friends and family members. Such people are unlikely to be dissuaded by warnings of potential risks. The successful information campaign in a sense has to promise that one's future will be better if one remains at home. The information campaign thus has to make a compelling pitch that the long-term future will be so much better than the European alternative that it is worth staying home. The appeal of that promise has to do not just with the information campaign's content and delivery but also with the wider context of migration policies and development initiatives.

Looking beyond information campaigns, USAID might also consider other types of programming. The literature suggests that one of the greatest needs is actually in cushioning the economic impact of EU migration policies on communities such as Agadez, where the wider effects of crackdowns on migration are still playing out. Smugglers, and particularly youth thrown out of work by the crackdowns, need alternative livelihoods and would benefit from job creation programs and even

from cash transfers as they transition to a future with potentially reduced smuggling and migration. These interventions could also improve the political stability of these (former) transit zones. Another priority area is mitigating the effects of climate change in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, particularly for pastoralists and other highly vulnerable sectors. Finally, within Libya, it is crucial to strengthen, even further, the infrastructures for receiving and aiding migrants and returned migrants. Further research, meanwhile, could focus on obtaining greater clarity about who migrants in Libya are; about what separates the (admittedly sometimes blurry) categories of migrant, refugee, and asylum seeker; and about the latest trends in movement within Libya.

ANNEX I: ASSESSMENT STATEMENT OF WORK

USAID DRG-LER

TASKING REQUEST N015:

ASSESSING THE DRIVERS OF MIGRATION AND THE EFFECT OF MESSAGING ON MIGRATION

DATE OF REQUEST:

March 25, 2019; Base Year

TYPE OF TASK:

- Auxiliary Studies

SOW:

Pilot Research Questions: What are the primary drivers of irregular migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe through Libya? How important is access to accurate information about the risks, potential costs and benefits of attempting irregular migration? How important are economic incentives? Is the decision to migrate irregularly sensitive to interventions that provide accurate information about the risks, potential costs and benefits of the journey? Is the decision sensitive to material incentives to forego the journey altogether? What conclusions can we draw from the data for practical programming recommendations?

We are asking NORC to respond to the research questions with a literature review. Global Initiative (GI) may also support the NORC research by providing assistance with fieldwork and providing GI reports not publicly available that can inform the review, such as those from the European Trust Fund.

DATES OF PERFORMANCE AND TIMELINE:

To be gathered from PIs

DELIVERABLES:

- Evidence Review

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Please submit a concept note and budget within two weeks.

U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523