

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **AN EVALUATION OF AN EXTENDED INDEX ON PRO-DEVELOPMENT MIGRATION POLICIES**

Report to the Center for Global Development

by

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This paper identifies many migration-related policies as possible for their pro-development potential. We offer only a topside review of the literature in order to give a flavor of the extent of migration policies that are potentially pro-development. Much of the available literature recommends policies based on just a few best practices and/or ideas that have little proved track record. This is not meant to disparage, rather it points out that there is little of a systematic fashion that exists in the 21 nations being investigated here.

We required that the policies we evaluate be clearly related to migration; that there is a logical relationship with development; that there exist identifiable policy elements that can be assigned a value and ranked; and that there be readily accessed sources of information about most if not all of our 21 nations. We searched through most of the standard sources such as those provided by the UN, IOM, ILO, World Bank, IMF, and the OECD. We also made forays into national websites, but unsurprisingly found that they do not provide relevant information on the range of potentially relevant activities.

Throughout the paper we suggest several ideas for collecting relevant information to rank nations on their academic exchange programs, educational aid disbursements, foreign student visas, admission policies, and temporary work visas/programs. These are, perhaps, the easiest policies for which to imagine that a dedicated effort would yield enough information for useful indexes. Of equal interest is the range of co-development or immigrant-leveraging policies that are well-documented as best practices in the research literature. However, these tend to be ad hoc or limited instances and finding information about them. After examination of numerous data sources, this paper addresses available means of ranking nations on the following policy domains:

***Membership in International Organizations.*** There are at least three international organizations that have a role in the management of different aspects of manage international mobility (UNHCR, IOM, and the ILO). We rank the strength of membership on the two dimensions of financial contributions and ratification of relevant organizational conventions. Monetary contributions are given twice the weight of the acceptance of conventions because, with the exception of refugee conventions, universal acceptance is not the norm. There are reasonable disputes over specific terms of the various conventions, which are not central to the mission of

these organizations, while monetary contributions are necessary to their mandate. Sweden ranks the highest of the 21 nations in terms of its relative contribution to IOM and UNHCR membership and its acceptance of major conventions. Japan ranks the lowest.

***Brain Strain and Academic Exchange.*** Most observers concur that a significant emigration of skilled persons may strain a developing nation's ability to accrue the human capital necessary for economic development. In lieu of a comprehensive evaluation of targeted policies on recruitment, we rank the 21 nations on the degree to which they draw disproportionately on the international pool of tertiary educated migrants and, hence, the degree to which they create a likely brain strain. Then we measure the degree to which prospective policies to increase the admission of skilled workers exacerbates an existing high strain, or reduces that strain by seeking to lower the admission of skilled workers. Australia and the U.S. vie for the nation creating the greatest "brain strain" while Portugal's admission policy and immigrant population creates the least. At the same time, Norway has a disproportionate and high relative share of the world's tertiary-educated immigrants and its policies to seek yet more are, on these grounds, a contribution to further brain strain.

***Migrant Return.*** The degree to which policies foster migrant return is important because returning migrants, with their newly-acquired skills, contribute to the origin country's development. We sought numerical data on temporary work programs for low-skilled workers and found it readily reported, but very uneven. Yet, clearly there are far fewer legal temporary workers than unauthorized workers and, hence, some scope for expansion of legal temporary work programs. Otherwise, the United Nations Population Division publishes *World Population Policies* based on surveys. Four countries rank high in terms of a combination of their policies toward temporary workers (policies to increase their number), coupled with their policies toward permanent settlement (policies to reduce permanent settlement)—Italy, Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark report policies to increase temporary workers and maintain/lower permanent settlement. Otherwise, almost all other countries, except Ireland and New Zealand, report that they intend to maintain their current policies on temporary workers and permanent settlement.

***Foreign Aid and Co-development.*** There are several reinforcing reasons to argue that there should be some alignment between the number of foreign-born persons in a rich country and the development aid that it gives to those immigrants' nation of origin. The practical reason is simply that migrants enable aid dollars to be leveraged. Thus, we are interested here in the correspondence between the largest foreign-born populations and the foreign aid given to their countries of origin. In the case of Australia, Vietnam is the largest source country at 4.2 percent of its total foreign-born population. At the same time, 4.9 percent of Australian foreign aid went to Vietnam, which is a very close correspondence. But consider that Mexicans constitute 30 percent of the foreign-born in the United States, but Mexico receives just 0.2 percent of the U.S. total aid disbursements. Indeed, there is a low correspondence generally between foreign-born populations in most rich nations and the aid distributed to their source countries.