

The impact of migration on nutrition: the case of Vietnam

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Abstract

Using panel data from the 2004 and 2006 Vietnam Household Living Standards Surveys, this paper explores the relationship between migration and food security and nutrition. Using an instrumental variable approach to control for the endogeneity of migration, our results indicate that short-term migration has a positive effect on overall per capita food expenditures, per capita calorie consumption and food diversity. Long-term migration also appears to be positively related to food security, but impacts are often insignificant and of a lesser magnitude than short-term migration. Given that the probability of short-term migration is also found to be linked to household shocks, short-term migration appears to be a strategy for households to overcome food insecurity and obtain food or the income to obtain food in times of crises. The results suggest that to improve food security the Vietnamese government should enact policies that facilitate short-term migration flows as well as the transferring of remittances.

Keywords: food security, nutrition, migration, Southeast Asia, Vietnam