

INTERVIEW

03. September 2024

Internal migration in Indonesia: How different destinations influence the success of children at school

Interview with Hanna Schwank, EPOS Economic Research Center

Bonn, Mannheim, 03.09.2024 – **The prospects of children to successfully complete primary and secondary school crucially depend on where they live: In districts with a higher average educational attainment, children in Indonesia who have migrated from other parts of the country are more likely to graduate from school than in those with a lower level of education among local children. This is shown by analyzing population census data on internal migration in Indonesia. The EPOS Economic Research Centre at the Universities of Bonn and Mannheim publishes the results in the discussion paper „Childhood Migration and Educational Attainment: Evidence from Indonesia“.**

Ms. Schwank, what are your key research findings and what is the background of education in Indonesia?

Hanna Schwank: This is the first study in the Indonesian context that shows a causal relationship between the average educational attainment in a district and the probability that children who have migrated from other parts of the country successfully complete school. Over time, the level of education achieved by migrants' children approaches that of local children. After about five years, the gap has narrowed by around 10 per cent.

In general, the level of education in Indonesia has improved significantly – also thanks to one of the world's largest school-building programmes. However, the literacy rate in urban settings is still higher in all age groups than in rural areas.

Traditionally, many people in Indonesia leave their home region in search of new

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opportunities, for example in the labour market. The prospects of future generations also play a role. Information on educational opportunities in different districts can enhance the decision-making of migrant households.

Which children benefit most from internal migration?

Hanna Schwank: The study shows that children from less educated families benefit most from moving to districts with higher levels of education. The longer they live in their new destination, the more likely they are to complete primary and secondary school successfully.

How did you compare the level of education in different districts?

Hanna Schwank: I determined the educational quality of the district based on the average level of education of the local school children.

What data is your study based on?

Hanna Schwank: The study is based on comprehensive data from the Indonesian Population Census from 2000 and 2010. The information on siblings' year and place of birth can be used to infer the exact timing of family migration. This new approach makes it possible to also use data that do not contain any explicit information on internal migration.

To what extent are your research results also relevant for other countries?

Hanna Schwank: The study shows that choosing a migration destination with a high quality of education promotes children's success at school. This is relevant in countries with significant regional disparities in educational resources and opportunities, especially in developing contexts.

The presented discussion paper is a publication without peer review of the Collaborative Research Center Transregio 224 EPoS. Access the full discussion paper here: <https://www.crctr224.de/research/discussion-papers/archive/dp582>

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Established in 2018, [the Collaborative Research Center Transregio 224 EPOS](#), a cooperation of the universities Bonn and Mannheim, is a long-term research institution funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). EPOS addresses three key societal challenges: how to promote equality of opportunity; how to regulate markets in light of the internationalization and digitalization of economic activity; and how to safeguard the stability of the financial system.

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