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Migrants' remittances and financing adaptation to climate change at the local level: Experiences from Ghana

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The much-trumpeted Green Climate Fund and several other official financial mechanisms for financing adaptation to climate change under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change have fallen short in meeting adaptation needs. Many poorer people are still grappling with the scourge of climate change impacts. Consequently, there has been a dominant research focus on climate change financing emanating from official development assistance (ODA), adaptation fund, public expenditure and private sector support. However, there has been little attempt to examine how migrants' remittances can close adaptation financing gaps at the local level, ostensibly creating a large research gap. This paper aims to argue that migrants' remittances provide a unique complementary opportunity for financing adaptation and have a wider impact on those who are extremely vulnerable to climate change. The paper is aligned to the qualitative research approach. Both secondary and primary data acquired through interviews and focus group discussions were used for the study. Multiple sampling methods were also used to select the respondents. The findings show that remittances are used to finance both incremental costs of households' infrastructure and consumption needs, as well as additional investment needs to be occasioned by ongoing or expected changes in climate. In the wake of dwindling government/public revenue, ODA and poor commitment of Annex II countries to fulfill their financial obligations, the study makes the following recommendations: Firstly, the financial infrastructure underpinning money transfers in both sending and recipient countries should be improved to make transfers attractive. Secondly, significant steps should be taken to reduce the fees on remittance services, especially for the small transfers typically made by poor migrants. Finally, adequate climatic information should be made available to local people to ensure that remittances are applied to the right adaptation option to avoid maladaptation.

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