



Bangladesh

Country Briefing Note

April 2014

Acknowledgements:

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) which supports policies, programmes and projects to promote poverty reduction globally, is providing funds for work conducted in the Migrating out of Poverty programme. However the views and opinions expressed are those of the author(s) alone. This note may be reproduced free of charge in any format provided the source is acknowledged.

What is the Issue?

The UNDP estimates¹ that 740 million people migrate internally and another 90 million migrate within developing country regions, often to improve development prospects for themselves and their families and due to lack of alternatives. Migration can contribute to improving the economic and social well-being of migrants and their families. However, it can also expose migrants to new vulnerabilities, such as debt and limited access to services. Political authorities and origin and destination communities often do not have effective policies in place to adequately manage migration.

While many governments in the global South and international donors have become aware of the importance of migration for poverty reduction, they lack substantive evidence and data that can help them to maximise the benefits of migration and minimise its potential harms.

What is the Programme?

The [Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme](#) Consortium is a six and half year (2010-2017) multi-partner research programme with funds of £6.425m provided by DFID, aimed at generating policy relevant evidence on the nature and extent of internal and regional (South-South) migration.

The Consortium lead is the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex with partners based in five regions: in South Asia, the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU); in Southeast Asia, the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS); in West Africa, the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) at the University of Ghana; in East Africa, the African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC); in Southern Africa, the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) at the University of Witwatersrand.

Each partner, under the guidance and support of the Consortium lead, is responsible for designing and conducting research projects that address the overall programme research questions. The projects consist of academic research, complemented by activities to ensure the communication of findings and influencing of migration policy and practice.

What the programme aims to achieve

The research conducted by each partner is designed to address the following programme objectives:

- To understand why migration plays a significant role in poverty reduction in some places and contexts, but not in others
- To explore the transformational potential of migration on poverty
- To contribute to the generation of quality data on migration
- To have a strong policy focus
- To influence policy and practice through sharing findings with key actors such as policy makers, the media and civil society

¹ Human Development Report (HDR) (2009). Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development. New York: UNDP

On-Going Activities in Bangladesh

Currently the Consortium partner in Bangladesh, the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), is implementing four on-going research projects.

1. Household survey in six districts of Bangladesh

This survey of 1200 households in six districts aims to provide quantitative data that will contribute to our understanding of the role that migration plays in poverty reduction. The survey collected data on demographics, migration, remittances and wellbeing, and was administered to household heads as well as returned migrants. The survey yields data on the relationship between migration and poverty, which will be analysed to identify the factors that mediate and shape the impact of migration on poverty. The draft report presenting the findings of the survey is due on 20 April 2014.

The findings of this survey will influence policy and practice through a number of research uptake activities, including a dissemination workshop (scheduled for July 2014) aimed at Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Planning Commission, relevant ministries, policy makers and the media; a Policy Brief focusing on the impact of migration on poverty (scheduled for June 2014) aimed at policy makers and the media.

The database generated provides quality data on internal and regional migration (although all types are covered) that will form part of the open access dataset being constructed by the Consortium.

2. Cross Border Movement of the Rohingyas from Burma: Exclusion, vulnerability and coping mechanisms

This study aims to develop a better understanding of experiences of the Rohingyas as they migrate from Burma to Bangladesh. It investigated the socio-economic profile of unregistered Rohingya households in four Upazillas in Cox's Bazar district of Southern Bangladesh, their migration experiences and coping strategies, and their experiences of accessing services and social protection.

This qualitative research includes a short questionnaire with 300 households (200 Rohingyas, 80 internal migrants & 20 non-migrants), key informant interviews with officials and local leaders from host communities, and semi-structured interviews with migrants. The interviews have been completed and the draft report of the findings will be submitted by 30 April 2014.

This research speaks to the programme objective of a strong policy focus; the research project was designed in response to an expressed need for evidence on the issue from researchers and civil society organisations working with the Rohingya community in Bangladesh.

This project seeks to influence policy and practice towards the Rohingya through a number of research uptake activities: A second Policy Brief focused on lessons for policy, will be published in June 2014 aimed at policy makers, NGOs and the media (the first Policy Brief, introducing the issues was published in March 2014); a regional conference: addressing the Rohingya problem – the need for international cooperation, is proposed, aimed at relevant ministries, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and the UN; several newspaper articles on the research findings will be submitted to the media; findings will be presented at two academic seminars before August 2014.

3. Global Policy Work: Institutional Strengthening of the Office of Labour Attaches

This is a qualitative piece of research designed to identify a number of measures for strengthening the offices of labour attaches of three countries of origin – Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India – located in two destination countries – Malaysia and Qatar. The research comprises secondary literature reviews and semi-structured interviews with key informants including migrant workers, Labour Attaches, and others in diplomatic missions, government functionaries and civil society representatives. The literature review and interviews have been completed and the draft research report will be submitted by 15 June 2014.

This research has a strong policy focus through the identification of measures for strengthening the offices of labour attaches to protect migrant workers from poor working conditions, and to ensure adequate provision of job and welfare related information.

The research seeks to influence policy and practice through: publication of a policy brief (scheduled for July 2014) aimed at members of concerned parliamentary standing committees, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors and the media; a dissemination workshop (scheduled for August 2014), aimed at members of concerned parliamentary standing committees, relevant ministries, UN agencies, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors and the media; newspaper articles on the research findings will be submitted to the media; a seminar to be held at one of the national institutes in Bangladesh by August 2014, aimed at researchers, academics and policy makers.

4. Impact of Migration on Poverty: the case of construction workers of India, Nepal and Bangladesh

This is a mixed methods research project aimed at studying the conditions facing migrant construction workers in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. The two objectives of the research are to identify (1) the mechanisms by which migration to this sector can lead to poverty reduction for households of sending families at source, and (2) how living and working conditions of migrant workers can be improved. The research specifically explores the role of social networks, skills development and social protection programmes as mechanisms for reducing poverty and vulnerability.

The research comprises a questionnaire survey of 150 construction workers in each study area, focus group discussions, and in-depth case histories of migrants including direct observation of their living conditions. The final research report has been submitted and Working Paper is in preparation (scheduled for 31 May 2014). The findings show that migration into construction work has helped the families of migrants improve consumption, accumulate assets and educate their children.

This research contributes to the programme objective of understanding why migration plays a significant role in poverty reduction in some places and contexts, but not in others. It will also have policy relevance for relevant policy makers in each country and also for trade unions and NGOs.

The research will influence policy and practice through the publication of Policy Briefs, scheduled for 30 June 2014 (drafts have been submitted), aimed at policy makers, REHAB – federating body of real estate and builders associations, Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies, trade unions, NGOs, ILO and the media; newspaper articles on the research findings will be submitted to the media.

Future Activities in Bangladesh

RMMRU is also in the process of developing three research proposals to be conducted over the period October 2014 to June 2016:

1. Intra household dynamics with a specific focus on age and gender

This strand of research will contribute to the programme objective of understanding the transformational effect of migration on poverty through investigating the changes in social and gender relations that take place as a result of household members migrating. Three inter-related areas will be investigated. Firstly, how remittances are used and managed within the household. Secondly, the changing gender relations within the household as different household members migrate, and the patterns of re-integration of return migrants into the economic and social life of their families and communities. Thirdly, the impact of longstanding migration on the perception and aspirations of young people with regard to the place of migration in their own future trajectories.

This will be primarily a qualitative piece of research with households drawn from the 1,200 households of the quantitative household survey for in-depth interviews with different household members.

The research design will be replicated by all partners that have completed a quantitative household survey. The findings from across the five regions of the consortium will contribute to the programme objectives of providing original quality data on migration and influencing policy and practice through the dissemination and sharing of the findings.

2. Policy Processes

This strand of research will analyse the dynamics of policy formulation and implementation with a focus on power relations, different interest groups, the role of civil society and the interaction of national and local government. The proposed research in Bangladesh will complement similar research in Singapore and South Africa. The three country comparative study will explore why the minimum wage for domestic workers has been introduced in South Africa, and the regulation requiring a weekly rest day for domestic workers has been introduced in Singapore, whereas in Bangladesh, despite much lobbying and advocacy by civil society, protection legislation for domestic workers has not been introduced.

This qualitative research will involve semi—structured interviews with stakeholders involved in the different aspects of policy formulation and will contribute directly to the programme objective of research with a policy focus.

3. Migration Industry

This strand of research will investigate the formal and informal private sector operators providing a service facilitating the recruitment and placement of Bangladeshi construction workers to the Gulf States and Southeast Asian countries. The research will focus specifically on the costs of these services borne by the migrants themselves, and the degree and nature of regulation that govern the operation of these private sector providers.

This qualitative research will involve semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in this sector including private sector providers and migrants. The findings will contribute to the programme objective of providing a policy focus through a greater understanding of whether better regulation of the industry would reduce the costs of migration and enable migrants to benefit more fully from their migration.

Related Activities

The Sussex Centre for Migration Research (also based in the School of Global Studies at University of Sussex) and RMMRU implemented a Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) funded project on climate change-related migration in Bangladesh in 2012-13. The project aimed to understand, plan for and respond to climate-induced migration. It sought ways to reduce vulnerability and build resilience of the Bangladeshi people to withstand the impact of climate change. A series of papers have been produced and Policy briefs are available on the Migrating out of Poverty website at:

<http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/research/migrationandclimatechange/bangladesh/publications>

RMMRU is co-hosting a conference on internal migration with the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD), World Bank 30 April – 1 May in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This conference aims to bring together researchers, policy makers, development planners and practitioners from Asia, Africa and Latin America to look at internal movement of people and urbanization, on what that means for development today and in the future, and how appropriate policies could be framed to ensure the rights of the migrants are protected. Several Consortium partners will be presenting papers that document the findings from the Migrating Out of poverty Research Programme funded research.

Schedule of Reports, Working Papers and Policy Briefs

Research project	Output	Milestone
1. Household survey	Draft research report Policy Brief Dissemination Workshop	20 April 30 June 2014 31 July 2014
2. Cross border movement of Rohingya	Draft research report Policy Brief I Policy Brief II	30 April 2014 Published March 2014 30 June 2014
3. Institutional Strengthening of Labour Attaches	Draft research report Policy Brief Dissemination workshop	15 June 2014 31 July 2014 31 August 2014
4. Impact of migration on poverty: construction workers	Research report Working Paper Policy Brief	Submitted 31 May 2014 30 June 2014
Future research	Proposals submitted to University of Sussex for ethical review and approval	30 June 2014

About the Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium

Migrating out of Poverty is a research programme consortium (RPC) funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). It focuses on the relationship between migration and poverty – especially migration within countries and regions - and is located in five regions across Asia and Africa. The main goal of ***Migrating out of Poverty*** is to provide robust evidence on the drivers and impacts of migration in order to contribute to improving policies affecting the lives and well-being of impoverished migrants, their communities and countries, through a programme of innovative research, capacity building and policy engagement. The RPC will also conduct analysis in order to understand the migration policy process in developing regions and will supplement the world renowned migration databases at the University of Sussex with data on internal migration.

The ***Migrating out of Poverty*** consortium is coordinated by the University of Sussex, and led by CEO Professor L. Alan Winters with Dr Priya Deshingkar as the Research Director. Core partners are: the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) in Bangladesh; the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) at the University of Ghana; the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at the National University of Singapore; the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa; and the African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC) in Kenya.

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