



# Making Migration Work for Development

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# Foreword

This report is the culmination of six years' research by the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty and brings work from anthropologists, economists, geographers and political scientists from across the world together in a way that reflects the multidisciplinary and international strengths of the University of Sussex as well as the way in which migration can affect and be affected by diverse areas of life. The Centre's partners, from Albania, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana and the UK, have brought innovative and creative thinking to an area of research which has grown in importance over the lifetime of the Centre.

It is a great satisfaction to see researchers at the University of Sussex and its partners setting the agenda for migration policy in a way which could have a tangible effect on the well-being of migrants and their families across the world. Much migration policy is focused on how development can be used to prevent migration, but this document takes a fresh direction which puts migrants and their countries of origin at the centre of policy debates.



**Michael Farthing**  
Vice-Chancellor  
University of Sussex

# Summary of key findings

The Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty was established in June 2003, in recognition of the complex relationship between migration and poverty. Over the past six years, our programme of research, capacity-building, training and promotion of dialogue has been motivated by the need to provide the strong evidential and conceptual base for new policy approaches to migration and development.

Central to the Centre's work has been our focus on what migration means for development and poverty reduction, rather than asking whether more development might result in less (or more) migration.

The Centre's findings indicate that, for migration to have its full developmental impact, the most beneficial policy change would be to reduce barriers to migration, at all levels and particularly for the poorest.

The Centre's work has included the compilation of data on migration flows, with an emphasis on those least-well represented in existing datasets; conceptual analysis of the links between migration, globalisation and poverty; major thematic and regional reviews of emerging migration issues and policies; as well as targeted empirical field research in a number of countries in West Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and South-East Europe. This work has resulted in the compilation of a number of robust databases and user-friendly web resources; the production of more than 40 working papers and 50 refereed journal articles or book chapters; and new conceptual approaches in areas that include, but are not limited to, the migration of children and youth; the mobility of highly skilled professionals; and social protection by and for work migrants.

When the Centre started, we developed our analysis by focusing on three key areas: the changing dynamics of migration; the impacts of migration on poverty and livelihoods; and 'new initiatives' relating to international migration. This document sets out the Centre's key findings across these three broad areas, and is organised into ten sections, each drawing out a 'headline' message that emerges from the Centre's research. In each section, more-detailed findings are highlighted, a selection of which are presented in this document. This is intended to provide an overview of the robust evidence from which conclusions have been drawn.

**In relation to the *changing dynamics of migration*, we highlight three overarching findings:**

**1 Poor people are more likely to move over shorter distances, either within or between poor countries.** Despite being overlooked by most policy makers, these South-South international migrants and internal migrants in the South represent a clear majority of migrants worldwide.

**2** One of the least visible forms of migration, but one of particular importance in poor communities, is that of **children and young people who move without their parents.** Children and youth seek economic and social opportunities in better-off regions and often make their own decisions to move.

**3 Education and training play a major role in the migration decisions of children and poor people** but are easily overlooked. Indeed migration and education often go hand-in-hand. Although migration can in a few cases lead to children dropping out of school, it is more common for migration to facilitate investment in education, either in the place of origin or of destination.

In relation to the *impacts of migration on poverty and livelihoods*, we highlight a further three key findings:

**4 Liberalising the mobility of people should lead to global welfare benefits.** Migration is also a common livelihood strategy of the poor, and represents an important route out of poverty for many poor people. However, migration is not without risks and costs.

**5 Where poor people have a greater choice in terms of migration destinations, the net effect on inequality is more likely to be positive.** Migration can increase or decrease inequality, depending on geographical scale and the location and type of inequality.

**6 Access to formal social protection for migrants is highly patchy,** as are agreements between countries that allow people to transfer social benefits from one state to another. This lack of portability can undermine the development potential of international migration.

In turn, in relation to *new initiatives in international migration*, we highlight key findings in three areas:

**7 Skilled migration is largely a symptom, not a cause, of underdevelopment.** A distinction needs to be drawn between countries that export skilled labour from a large pool of supply, and those which are losing high proportions of scarce and critical human resources.

**8 Migration streams, migration work destinations and migration impacts show marked differences between men and women that are not accurately described by the notion of a ‘feminisation of migration’.** Migration can both exacerbate the impact of existing gendered roles and bring about significant changes in gender norms.

**9 Diaspora engagement can contribute to the development of countries of origin** but this is a highly politicised arena. Such engagement includes the transfer of financial capital, and the exchange of skills and knowledge, and does not require migrants to return to be effective and sustainable.

Finally, we seek to draw findings together in relation to the development of *policy on migration*, where we find that:

**10 Policy development on migration remains fragmentary,** and there is still a lack of consensus on what pro-poor migration policies should look like in poor countries.

Further details about the projects on which these findings are based, as well as data and knowledge resources, are available at the Centre’s website, at [www.migrationdrc.org](http://www.migrationdrc.org).

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“For migration to have its full developmental impact, the most beneficial policy change would be to reduce barriers to migration, at all levels and particularly for the poorest.”



**Richard Black**

Director, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty



# Changing dynamics of migration

## Policy

Continuing to improve the quality of data on stocks and especially on flows of migrants remains a major task. This can and should be facilitated by the standardisation of census questions; increasing the public availability of micro data; and further dissemination of model 'migration modules' within existing socio-economic surveys.<sup>1</sup>

## Key finding 1: South–South international and internal migration

Poor people are more likely to move over shorter distances, either within or between poor countries. Despite being overlooked by most policy makers, these South–South international migrants and internal migrants in the South represent a clear majority of migrants worldwide.

1 Since its inception, the Centre has placed emphasis on the provision of robust empirical data from which to develop clear conclusions about the relationship between migration, globalisation and poverty. This has included an effort to improve the quality and availability of globally and nationally representative statistical data on migration, as well as investment in empirical case studies of a quantitative and qualitative nature.

Two major new databases have resulted from this effort; the *Global Migrant Origin Database*<sup>2</sup> – a 226x226 matrix of bilateral migration stocks compiled from national censuses (the latest round in 2000–2001), population registers, national statistical bureaux and a number of secondary sources;<sup>3</sup> – and the *Migration in National Surveys*<sup>4</sup> web resource, which provides summary information and web links to 165 nationally representative data sources worldwide, each of which includes specific information on migrants and/or migration, including the migration of children. In addition, the *Global Migrant Origin Database* has been used to underpin the *World Migration Map Data Tool*,<sup>5</sup> which sets out in map and tabular form the major migration flows to and from countries worldwide.

Based on these statistical data, it has been possible to draw the following key findings of importance to the relationship between migration and poverty:

1.1 It is estimated that **South–South migration constituted around half of all international migration from the South** at the turn of the 21st century, representing between 61 and 74 million people.<sup>6</sup>

1.2 There are also **substantial flows that are internal to countries in the global South**, including an estimated 34 million inter-provincial migrants in China in 2000,<sup>7</sup> and 42 million inter-state migrants in India in 2001.<sup>8</sup>

1.3 **South–South international migration is particularly significant for sub-Saharan Africa**, where 69 per cent of international migrants were living in other sub-Saharan African countries in 2001.<sup>9</sup>

1.4 **South–South international migration and internal migration in the South are of particular significance for poor people, and for poverty.** For example:

- In much of the Savannah belt of Ghana and Burkina Faso, migration to Europe is only a dream for children and youth from poor families, whereas internal migration is an option for all, even rural children in their teens, so long as they can afford the



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bus fare.<sup>10</sup> Youth from poor families also find the means to travel to Côte d'Ivoire, where wages are higher and, since the peace agreement in March 2007, to where the flow of Burkinabé youth has increased significantly.

- Circular migration is a particularly common form of migration in the South and is a major livelihood strategy of the poor. Interviews with 242 male migrant workers in Egypt demonstrate that circular movement is a 'survival strategy' to sustain

the basic needs of migrants' families left behind in Upper Egypt.<sup>11</sup>

- A number of our studies in South Asia highlight the high volume of circular, temporary and/or seasonal labour migration by rural households that effectively straddle labour markets in two or more locations. Whilst this includes some South–North international migration, it typically involves the spreading of household members across national or regional labour markets.

A child works hanging fish to dry at a dry-fish plant on Sonadia island. Dried fish is a popular Bengali food, with 50,000 people employed in the industry in the coastal areas.



- Research in southern Bangladesh, and in the state of Jharkhand in India, shows that, whilst a minority of richer families are able to migrate internationally or find local white-collar occupations, for the majority of other families, labour migration of one or more family members to local towns and the national or state capital, often for poorly-paid jobs, is a key component of household income.<sup>12</sup>

- Evidence from Albania suggests that the bottom 20 per cent in terms of *per capita* consumption expenditure – the poorest – are unlikely to consider international migration. However, on average, a 5 per cent rise in district-level hourly wages was found to reduce the probability that an individual considers migrating by half of one percentage point.<sup>13</sup> The relationship between poverty and propensity to migrate in Albania is thus best illustrated by a bell-shaped curve, whereby both the very poorest and the best-off are the least likely to migrate.

- Despite the above examples, data on circular migration, whether internal or international, remains poor or non-existent in many regions.

1.5 The Centre’s qualitative research has also made clear that, especially within South–South international and internal flows in the South (*see Key Finding 2*), **there are significant movements of children**, including children moving independently. However, data sources on migration are currently poorly designed to capture these flows.<sup>14</sup>

1.6 Climate change is likely to impact the factors that drive migration but widely circulated estimates and projections of the volume of climate-related migration have little basis in evidence. A review of climate–migration linkages in sub-Saharan Africa suggests that **the most vulnerable to climate change may be those least able to migrate**, and that where they do move, this is often over short distances.



## Policy

There is an urgent need for policy development to support children and youth in safe mobility that realizes their aspirations. Actions to support migrant children should build on the measures that they, their parents and communities are already taking to promote positive outcomes for children.

In turn, terms used to describe different categories of child migrants – such as trafficked or fostered – often tell us little about the extent to which a child migrant is vulnerable to exploitation and/or abuse. The vulnerabilities of specific groups of child migrants need to be more sensitively addressed, paying attention to the contexts in which children have made the decision to migrate.

## Key finding 2: Mobility of children and youth

One of the least visible forms of migration, but one of particular importance in poorer countries, is that of children and young people who move without their parents. Children and youth seek economic and social opportunities in better-off regions and often make their own decisions to move.

2 Several of the Centre's research projects in Ghana, Burkina Faso, Bangladesh and India have focused on children who migrate independently, without their parents or guardians, either within their home country or to a neighbouring country. These child migrants tended to come from poor areas where there are high rates of adult out-migration. The majority moved between the ages of 14 and 17, but there were some 12–13-year-old migrants and a small minority aged 10–12. A key element of this area of research was to interview child migrants themselves, as well as some adults.

### 2.1 **Many of the children interviewed in the Centre's research viewed migration as a significant opportunity**

that allows them to exercise their own life choices, improve economic opportunities and sometimes earn funds for their education. Their experiences are diverse, as young migrants are positively or negatively affected by economic circumstances, the existence of extended family networks, established gender roles and the expectations of their parents.<sup>16</sup>

- Trafficked children appear to constitute only a small share of migrant children. Whilst the issues affecting those who are trafficked should not be downplayed, it is important to recognise that all child migrants are subject to a range of risks and vulnerabilities.

### 2.2 **Children in different locations were found to migrate from a range of motives.**

- In West Africa independent child migration is an outcome of chronic poverty and a lack of economic and social opportunities in rural areas, but it is also a route to greater social maturity and obtaining work-based skills.<sup>17</sup> For some, migration is a step towards getting the resources to marry; others hope to secure better education, or to save to go to secondary school.
- In Bangladesh child migrants constitute two broad groups: the first comprises rational economic agents who, recognising the gaps in opportunities between home and the cities, choose to migrate; and the second is made up of victims of economic deprivation, social discrimination or environmental degradation.<sup>18</sup> Personal motivation also ranks high on children's

The children viewed migration as a significant opportunity that allows them to exercise their own life choices.

agenda for moving in search of a life that is different and, in many ways, better than the one they have been born into.

- In Karnataka, health shocks and chronic poverty persist as causes of migration, but another recent trigger is educational failure. Boys who are not succeeding at school face wrath and violence from parents and schoolteachers and stigma from their peers. Some negotiate permission to go away to work as the least-worst alternative.<sup>19</sup>

- In India, younger brothers are increasingly being encouraged into premature entry into the labour force, to fund the dowry expenses of their sisters.<sup>20</sup>

- An important element in understanding the causes of child migration concerns the extent to which children themselves are involved in decision-making about their migration. Overall, we found that children play a large part in making the decisions about their mobility, although these are rarely straightforward.

- In Bangladesh the decision stems in most cases from a joint resolution by parents/guardians and children, but some children migrate despite resistance from parents, or only half-hearted support. A few children run away from home, often for specific reasons, and do not even consider asking their parents.<sup>21</sup>

- In Ghana and Burkina Faso, children are usually actively involved in the decision-making surrounding their mobility and often make the choice themselves to migrate; a few do not consult their parents at all. Two-thirds of children interviewed

who had migrated from the Northern Region to Kumasi and Accra reported that it was their decision, but the process suggests the tacit involvement of at least one parent or other relation.<sup>22</sup>

- In India, while young boys in Karnataka's coastal belt often strike tough bargains with their parents to push through their own preferences for migration, similar intra-household disagreements in Mandya District may instead result in young boys running away without informing anyone at home about their plans or intentions.<sup>23</sup>

2.3 In practice, **child migrants often balance their responsibilities within the family and their personal aspirations** and this is influenced by family circumstances and their social environment.

- Losing one parent by death often increases the likelihood of a child migrating to work. In the Ghana and Bangladesh studies, for some children migration for work is a response to acute need, where a father is disabled or sick or where a family is headed by a lone mother.<sup>24</sup>

- Most of the young migrants interviewed, while seeking to increase their opportunities for independent incomes and to escape from the uniformity of rural life, are mindful of their family's circumstances and send remittances to their parents, or to help siblings.<sup>25</sup>

- As they get older, migrant youth increasingly use their incomes to help their home communities. The Burkina Faso study found that, when they first migrated, adolescents use their earnings to meet



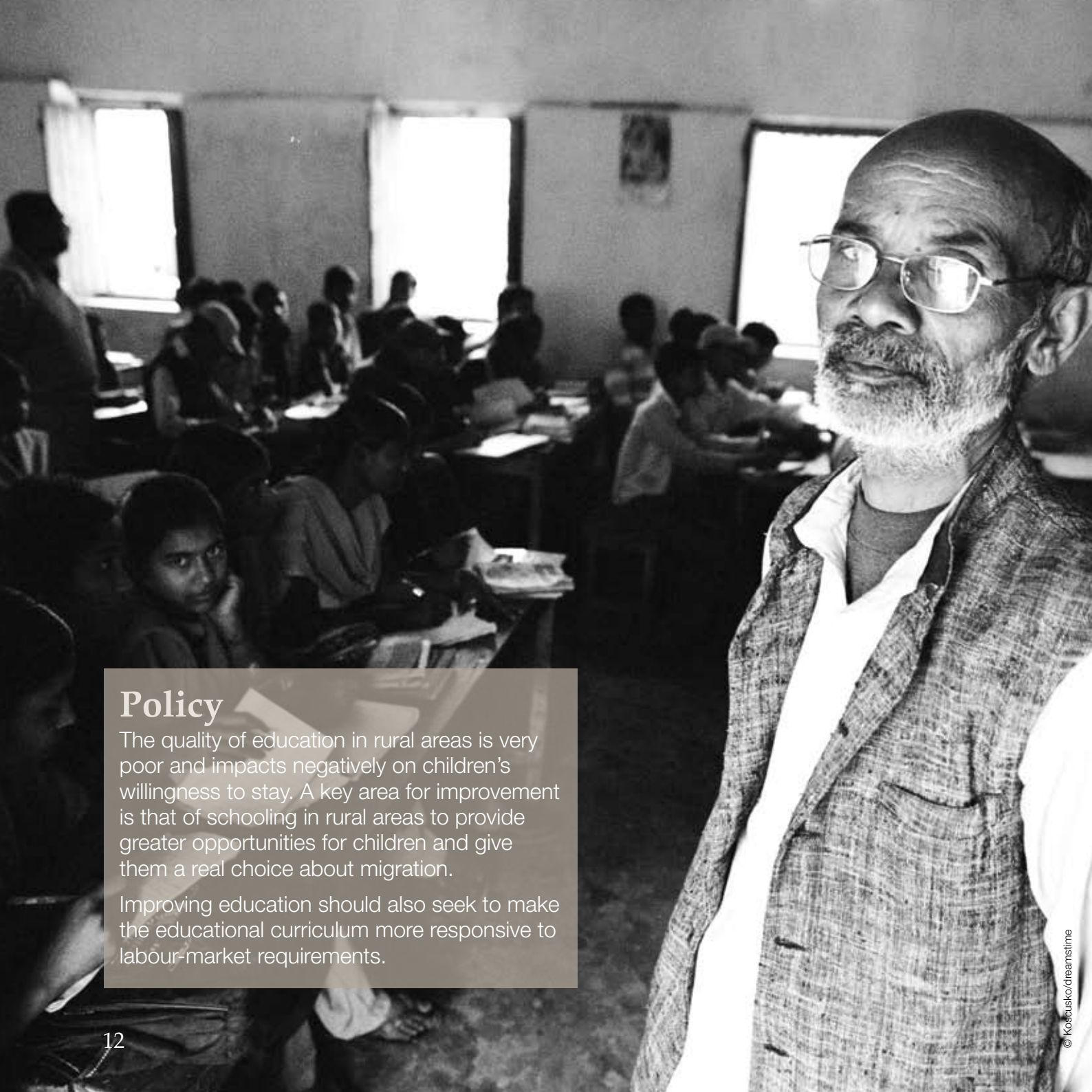
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their needs in town and to buy clothes but, as they grow older (and earn more), they pay more attention to using their savings to help their rural families, either at time of crisis or in longer-term goals such as help in building a house.<sup>26</sup>

- Migration during adolescence allows children to negotiate relationships with parents and older relatives on a new and less-passive footing and may represent a significant pathway for these changes to occur. Migrant children may be important and positive agents for change.<sup>27</sup>

- Children use friends, neighbours and relatives to make their journeys safe, to find or provide shelter and to help them to find work.<sup>28</sup>

A training session on the beach for young African footballers who are enrolled in the football academy run by Dutch club Feyenoord. The academy, which has a team entered in the Ghanaian league, provides a formal education as well as coaching players in order that the best will be transferred to Feyenoord.



## Policy

The quality of education in rural areas is very poor and impacts negatively on children's willingness to stay. A key area for improvement is that of schooling in rural areas to provide greater opportunities for children and give them a real choice about migration.

Improving education should also seek to make the educational curriculum more responsive to labour-market requirements.

### Key finding 3: Migration, education and training

Education and training play a major role in the migration decisions of children and poor people but are easily overlooked. Indeed migration and education often go hand-in-hand. Although migration can in a few cases lead to children dropping out of school, it is more common for migration to facilitate investment in education, either in the place of origin or of destination.

**3** Our work on the relationship between migration, education and training has encompassed studies both of the significance of education in the migration decisions of children and poor people, and of the development of a new framework for understanding the mobility of highly skilled professionals. (see *Key Findings* 7.6–7.8).

Education is a theme in all our work on the migration of children, but there has been a specific focus on the role of education in migration decisions, as well as the educational consequences of migration, in research in Bangladesh and India.

3.1 Concerning work on migration and education as it relates to children, a **strong and generally positive association was found between migration and education.**

- Money brought to West Bengal through short-term labour migration has made the education of children more affordable for some, potentially covering the main additional costs of going to school, and, above all, the cost of providing private tuition, considered vital for better performance in school.

- In South Asia, a number of teenage boys were found to migrate in order to fund part or even all of their own education. Teenage girls, however, did not migrate for work, on account of the prevailing gendered views that saw girls/women as ideally being confined to their homes.<sup>29</sup>

- In the past, many child labour migrants to Bombay were encouraged and given the opportunity to attend Kannada Night Schools by their hotel employers. Although presently in decline, these schools provided learning experiences that are reported on very positively by migrants.

- As in South Asia, children in West Africa migrate to rural or urban areas to get money for the costs associated with their education, especially at secondary level.

- In Ghana, a key reason for children migrating independently of their parents or elders is to access educational and training opportunities. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, many rural children join relatives in rural towns or larger cities to begin apprenticeships, although better-quality apprenticeships are sometimes inaccessible to poor migrants who cannot afford to pay fees, or do not have a relative willing to take them in.<sup>30</sup>



3.2 Nevertheless, interviews with child migrants with no education in Bangladesh reveal that 70 per cent of them had never attended school because of the 'impoverishment of their family'. They felt that, by migrating for work, they had missed their chance to go to school, and expressed regret at this.<sup>31</sup>

3.3 In a study conducted in Indian and Bangladeshi villages, the **quality of schooling and the existence of state scholarships and stipends were found to matter in poor, rural contexts, allowing children to postpone any decision to migrate** until after secondary school, and potentially enabling higher economic returns to migration.<sup>32</sup>

3.4 **Migration for work has created the need for a range of new skills and language competencies** in South Asia. Educational systems are yet to acknowledge the shifts in work contexts. There is need for a more diverse curriculum as well as a more flexible system of provision.<sup>33</sup>

3.5 For rural children and youth in West Africa, migration to the city is a learning process in itself, and there is evidence that **some either enrol in primary**

**school evening classes, or take up an apprenticeship a couple of years into their migration** in response to experiences of low or unpaid wages or poor working conditions.<sup>34</sup>

3.6 Overall, our research shows that **independent child migrants rarely drop out of school in order to migrate for work.**

- This is the case in the West African Savannah, largely because most had either already left school for other reasons well before they migrated, or were never enrolled.<sup>35</sup>

- However, there are some examples, such as in the coastal belt of Karnataka, India, where migration was found to be the reason why boys dropped out of school. Here child labour migration is increasingly initiated by boys themselves, especially those who are not doing well at school. Growing parental aspirations and school performance expectations, and the consequent widespread physical punishment, both at home and in school, are a primary cause of migration.<sup>36</sup>

- A study in the state of Jharkhand in India suggests that migration streams towards agricultural, construction, and other manual, factory or domestic work, often create a downward pressure on the demand for schooling. Here, migration for work is seen more as a pragmatic strategy for social mobility than as an investment in education, especially given the persistent decline in the availability of formal, white-collar employment.<sup>37</sup>

Schooling should be improved in rural areas to give children a real choice about migration; the curriculum should also be more responsive to labour-market requirements.



Although migration can lead to children dropping out of school, it is more common for migration to facilitate investment in education.

3.7 In Bangladesh, a study of international student migration abroad found that, in many cases, prospective students are unable to access relevant information independently due to a lack of language and research skills, of awareness of where to look, and of access to important sources. **Access to training abroad varies by social class:** students from wealthy backgrounds with good English-language skills, internet access and social contacts abroad, and greater confidence in finding information, are better positioned than the other sections of the society.<sup>38</sup>

- Reflecting this, migration, and especially international migration, appears to be positively correlated with levels of education, with a particularly high migration propensity in Africa amongst those who have completed university-level education. In Albania, however, the most qualified (i.e., university educated) were found to be less likely to aspire to migrate than those with either secondary or vocational education.





## Policy

Policy should seek to reduce barriers to labour migration in order for it to contribute more fully to poverty reduction. For example, a number of countries retain *de jure* or *de facto* restrictions on internal migration, whilst international migration is highly regulated.

Impacts of migration on  
poverty and livelihoods

## Key finding 4: Migration as a livelihood strategy

Liberalising the mobility of people should lead to global welfare benefits. Migration is also a common livelihood strategy of the poor, and represents an important route out of poverty for many poor people. However, migration is not without risks and costs.

Indian migrant workers erect electricity pylons leading from Northern Afghanistan to Kabul.

**4** Our research has included both macro-economic analysis that seeks to estimate the aggregate consequences of international mobility, and analysis of the livelihood consequences of migration as they are seen from the perspective of poor people and communities in developing countries. In relation to the former, the compilation and incorporation of bilateral migrant-stock data into a global applied general equilibrium model has enabled analysis of the impact of liberalising mobility at a global level. In addition, community-level studies have been undertaken in sending areas in Bangladesh, India, Ghana and Albania. We have also examined the incorporation of poorer migrants into destinations more broadly across South and South-East Asia, West Africa and the Middle East.

4.1 Findings from **macro-economic analysis** using general equilibrium modelling focused on examining the likely consequences of a 3 per cent increase in mobility of skilled and unskilled workers from developing countries **show benefits to nearly all countries from relaxing restrictions on mobility, with greater benefits from the movement of unskilled labour.**<sup>39</sup> Independent analysis by the World Bank's *Global Economic*

*Prospects 2006* – which uses our data – puts this benefit at \$350bn globally, with greater increases in relative terms for developing, compared to developed, countries.

- In developed economies, real incomes of permanent residents could increase by an average of \$200 per person, with over half of the increase coming from a lifting of quotas on unskilled labour. Permanent residents of developing countries could also gain by \$24 per person in real income from sending unskilled labour, but only \$4 from sending skilled labour.
- Whilst results differed across developing economies, most gain from higher remittances sent home. New migrants gain in real terms by over \$9,000 per person, whilst workers in developing countries also gain, as real wages rise with reduced labour supply.
- The only group of workers predicted by this analysis to lose in terms of real incomes are existing migrants in developed economies. Existing labour migrants tend to hold the most precarious jobs in the labour market and will be the most affected by competition from new migrants.

4.2 The Centre's research **at community level** has also provided important empirical findings in particular case

studies, which stress that **there are both benefits and risks or costs for international migrant workers and their home communities**. In general, international migration is more lucrative for migrants than internal migration, but it usually costs much more and involves much higher risks.

- In Bangladesh, remittances from low-skilled international migrants clearly help to improve the economic condition of their families back home. But there are some significant debts to middle men which cannot always be paid off, especially if migrants lose their jobs or fall ill. In the worst cases, potential migrants are tricked out of years of family savings in their efforts to enter the lucrative international job market.

- Even where migration brings them economic benefits, the social impact on some families left behind can be negative, for example in terms of the separation of families. Some families are better able to cope with such separation than others.

- The benefits of international migration do spread beyond the immediate families of international migrants. However, the Centre's work in Sylhet, Bangladesh,<sup>40</sup> shows that the help or protection poorer households get from migrants to the UK very much depends on relationships of patronage – contradicting evidence from elsewhere that patron-client relations are breaking down in the face of migration<sup>41</sup> (see *Key Finding 5.3*).

4.3 Community-level data, in particular from studies across South Asia, demonstrate a strong link between internal

migration and poverty; however, whilst **for the very poor, internal migration is often a survival strategy**, where members of the poorest households move to the poorest-paid urban or rural jobs to obtain any kind of income, members of slightly-better-off households migrate to get marginally-better-paid jobs that provide a potential route out of poverty.

- Research in North-West Bangladesh shows that seasonal internal migration for income and work provides much-needed core income beyond that which is available in poor areas. Meanwhile, the money acquired through migration is used to pay for household necessities, invest in crops and land, repay loans to NGOs and individuals, and to pay for the significant costs of the treatment of illness. However, only a few were found to have the opportunity to accumulate assets such as livestock and grain that serve as 'reserves' for the future.<sup>42</sup>

- In neighbouring West Bengal, temporary internal migration was seen as a reluctant but necessary and increasingly available livelihood strategy. Although agricultural work still dominated as the main sector of employment for migrants, work opportunities had expanded compared to an earlier study in the late 1990s, reflecting the Kolkata construction boom, and the expansion of rural brick manufacture and road-building.<sup>43</sup>

- A review of evidence across sub-Saharan Africa suggests that migration may be a key livelihood strategy that will allow households to build resilience in the face of climate change effects.



When the rural poor move to cities they often take the lowest paid jobs. This can still provide them with more of an income than is available in their rural villages.



#### 4.4 However, in some cases, **internal migration can significantly increase vulnerability.**

- Those migrating to work as rickshaw pullers, a phenomenon identified in two studies, are often highly vulnerable, as the work involved takes a terrible physical toll.<sup>44</sup>
- The wellbeing and vulnerability of child migrants depends on what kind of living situation they secure in their places of destination, whether they work or go to school, what kind of work they do and the social networks available to them. Three kinds of child migrant were found to be the most at risk. Some young child migrants working as hawkers and casual labour in Dhaka had difficulty in making enough income to eat, or were cheated and abused. Some of the young female migrants to Ghana's cities were vulnerable to sexual abuse and exposure to HIV/AIDS. Children migrating from abusive family situations are also more vulnerable. All these young migrants took steps to safeguard themselves by building strong peer relationships.<sup>45</sup>

- Many child migrants were found to have only a few years' education and few recognisable skills, and this confines them to low-paid and insecure work. Thus, many northern Ghanaian children migrate to work on farms, usually living in as family members, often with relatives.<sup>46</sup> They also migrate to perform a variety of types of work in the urban informal economy.<sup>47</sup> Young male Burkina Faso migrants in Ouagadougou seek waged employment, but they often engage in petty services such as shoe-shining as a tide-over activity before they find employment or when between jobs.<sup>48</sup>
- In Ghana, trends were observed which might imply increased vulnerability. The economic growth of the Southern cities has widened disparities between North and South. This acts as a magnet for young migrants and as a temptation for poor parents to agree to let children go, when they are perhaps less ready to meet the challenges they will face.<sup>49</sup>

### Migration Policy Engagement – Working With Communities

RMMRU has conducted a three-pronged campaign to ensure **rights for 'stranded Biharis' in Bangladesh.** On 5 September 2007 the government of Bangladesh decided to award citizenship rights to the 'Biharis', following the RMMRU campaign to highlight findings of their research which showed government policy was based on an outmoded notion of Bihari views. This has involved a multifaceted campaign, from high-level meetings to community consultations, press statements and

distribution of flyers. The second strand of the campaign has been to focus on 'rehabilitation with dignity' and the third to make a serious attempt to counteract stereotyping the role of the Biharis as the new government embarks on the trial of war criminals of 1971. The second and third elements of this campaign were based on the release of a short film, 'Naro Shundor' (The Barbershop), which was reviewed favourably in Bangladeshi newspapers and received a number of showings at the British Council in Dhaka.

## Key finding 5: Migration and inequality

Where poor people have a greater choice in terms of migration destinations, the net effect on inequality is more likely to be positive. Migration can increase or decrease inequality, depending on geographical scale and the location and type of inequality.

**5** Our work on the relationship between migration and inequality included a review of case studies from Central America, West Africa and South Asia, as well as empirical evidence from village case studies focused more broadly on migration, livelihoods and social protection. A global review did not provide conclusive evidence that migration either increases, or decreases inequality, but rather concluded that the nature of the effect depended both on the type of inequality that was of concern, and the specific circumstances of migration.<sup>46</sup>

The impact of migration on inequality varies in at least three ways:

5.1 Geographical scale – **migration appears to reduce inequality on a global scale**. As the increase in welfare resulting from an increase in the mobility of workers from developing countries accrues more to developing than developed countries (see *Key Finding 4.1*), it follows that migration can contribute to reducing global inequality. **However, this does not necessarily hold at national or local level**, where relatively richer households are able to benefit more from migration than poorer households.

- In village studies in South Asia, we did find empirical evidence of migration increasing inequality – in places of origin,

in particular because relatively richer households were able to benefit more from it than relatively poorer households.

- In Sylhet, so-called ‘Londoni’ households, where people have moved to the UK, build much bigger houses and invest in business enterprises; in contrast, households without an international migrant have slipped further behind economically in the face of a mini-boom funded by remittances. Thus, whilst overall economic growth has been funded by remittances, internal inequality has increased.

- In North-West Bangladesh, those migrants who ended up the worst-off were found to be those already struggling to make up for losses suffered due to river-bank erosion, chronic poverty or disability, where migration sometimes even compounded their problems; in contrast, those with some land, supportive kin or richer patrons were more likely to find that migration contributed to securing their futures.<sup>50</sup>

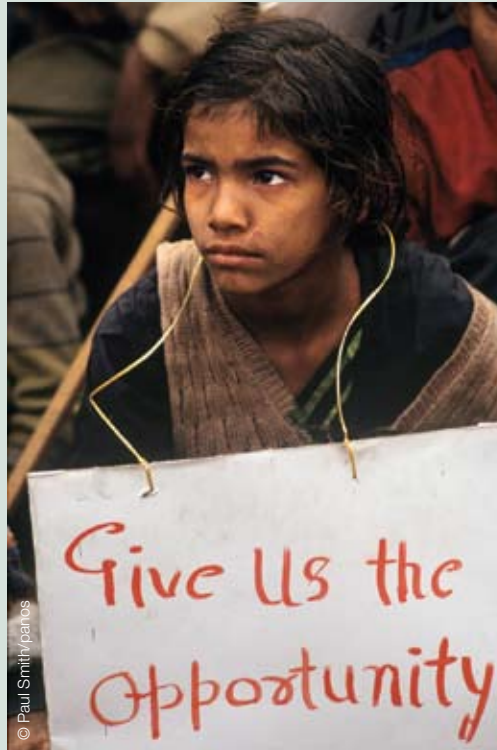
- Similarly, in West Bengal, women in households with micro-plots of land were better placed to get by in the absence of breadwinners than landless migrants. Older men, who found they were physically unable to carry out the hard work expected of migrants, often either tried to start a trading business, or took to begging.<sup>51</sup>

5.2 Different locations – **in countries of destination, migrants may have unequal rights compared to local workers, leading to an increase in local or national inequality**; however, in places of origin, effects on inequality are likely to be more diverse.

5.3 Type of inequality – **inequality is often measured in purely economic terms, but migration may also affect power relations** between rich and poor, different ethnic or caste groups, or between men and women.

- The case of Londoni villages in Sylhet, Bangladesh, demonstrates how the status of rich households involved in migration to the UK allows them to maintain strong patron–clientelist relations compared to the poor internal migrant labourers in their villages. Thus, whilst the poor receive social protection from the Londoni households, such benevolence comes with strings attached, with the poor having to provide a constant supply of ready labour, political support and other services which are rarely made explicit.<sup>52</sup>

5.4 Nonetheless, a general finding on inequality was that, **where poor people have a greater choice in terms of migration destination, the net effect on inequality is more likely to be positive.**



- Evidence for this has been identified in our work in Bangladesh, where restrictions on international unskilled female migration has driven the migration of poorer women into illegality, making them significantly more vulnerable to exploitation and reducing the potential for their migration to reduce either gender or income inequality.

- The Centre's research in Albania also shows that a major reason why the poor are restricted to less-beneficial migration opportunities within the country or to neighbouring Greece is because of strong restrictions on movement to elsewhere in Europe.

## Policy

A potential policy response to growing inequality would be to ensure wider access to a range of (legal) migration opportunities for poor people since, as more people move, the process of migration generally becomes more equitable. In contrast, where the poor are effectively restricted to shorter distance, less-remunerative or less-safe migration streams, they will lose ground in relation to less-poor migrants.



## Policy

The increased portability of benefits would be a practical way of improving conditions for returning migrants, removing reservations which some long-term international migrants might have about returning home and encouraging migrants' participation in the formal economy. A key challenge is for countries in the South to develop the capacity to coordinate pension payouts across international borders.

Increasing support to migrants' networks and associations would also help to bolster informal social protection structures.



## Key finding 6: Migration and social protection

Access to formal social protection for migrants is highly patchy, as are agreements between countries that allow people to transfer social benefits from one state to another. This lack of portability can undermine the development potential of international migration.

**6** The Centre's work on the relationship between migration and social protection has included global analysis of the portability of social benefits (carried out jointly with the World Bank); new survey evidence on migration and social protection in relation to South–South and South–North migration corridors from two sub-Saharan African countries – Malawi and Ghana; and detailed ethnographic analysis of social protection practices amongst internal migrants in Bangladesh, India and Ghana.

Although people who migrate across international borders have diverse profiles and needs, there are four essential components of social protection for international migrants: access to social security programmes in host countries; the portability of earned benefits (such as pensions); labour market conditions in host countries; and migrant social support networks.

In relation to the access of migrants to social protection:

**6.1 The majority of people who migrate between countries in the South do not have access to formalised social protection schemes** in their host countries (including retirement pensions, health insurance, bereavement benefits and injury compensation) as such schemes often do not exist.<sup>53</sup>

### **6.2 Particular problems are faced by internal and international migrants**

within the South, many of whom migrate and work with 'irregular' status. Their 'irregular' status not only further exacerbates the impossibility of them accessing any formal social protection programmes, but also means they often face exploitative or even abusive labour conditions.

- Temporary work migration is an essential part of many livelihoods in Bangladesh.<sup>54</sup> However, temporary work migrants often fall through the social protection net, and those left behind when family members migrate temporarily can be as vulnerable to risk and adversity as the migrants themselves.
- Both formal (state pensions, stipends and food grants) and informal (NGO and community support) forms of social protection depend on stability of residence and social relations, and hence disadvantage migrants in general.
- Food grants in Bangladesh are available as back-up support for short-term, temporary migrants. However, provision of state social protection is not sufficient for survival or for poor people to give up migration altogether. Internal migration to wealthier regions of the country, notably to areas that have seen other migrants moving to the Gulf or the UK, can be a vital safety net for the chronically poor, especially in times of crisis.

6.3 Ultimately, in cases where migrants receive no protection from the government of their host country, they must be prepared to shoulder the burden of any risks or difficulties they encounter during their migration or to **rely on social networks** composed of other migrants for support.

- Networks of kin and neighbours are key forms of social protection for wives left behind in South Asia by migrants to the Gulf. In turn, networks of patronage provide social protection for other poorer households, including in-migrants (see *Key Finding 4.7*).

- Social networks were found to be very important in mediating migrants' work experiences in both the cocoa and pineapple sectors in Ghana.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, migrants described themselves as having less social support than the indigenous population because their social networks (primarily in the form of extended family) are weaker. These differences are more evident in times of financial difficulty or when there is illness or death in the family. Despite this, migrants appear to take little advantage of opportunities to buttress their weak social position by joining different forms of association in their destination areas.

6.4 **In countries where formal social protection regimes are in place (generally OECD countries) there are significant gaps in social protection for migrants.** Those who face the most acute risks are 'irregular' migrants who work illegally. These workers often lack access to social security programmes

and are vulnerable to labour-market exploitation, health risks and other difficulties.

In relation to the portability of earned benefits:

6.5 **Migrants from the South often contribute to social security programmes while working abroad, but many have little to show for these contributions when they move on or return home.** This is particularly relevant in the case of public pensions, to which some migrants contribute significant sums of money while abroad.

- Just under a quarter (24 per cent) of all international migrants enjoy the portability of pension benefits, yet most of these workers are citizens of OECD countries. Some regional blocs, including the EU, have concluded multilateral agreements on portability and a number of countries have signed bilateral agreements ensuring the portability of pension benefits across international borders.

- In contrast, a majority (54 per cent) of international migrants have access to social security benefits in their host countries, but do not enjoy the portability of these benefits — and a disproportionate number of these migrants are from developing countries.

6.6 **Limits to the 'portability' (or transferability) of pensions give some short-term migrants less incentive to work in jobs in the formal sector,** if this means contributing to social security schemes from which they will not benefit.



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Both formal and informal forms of social protection depend on stability of residence and social relations, and hence disadvantage migrants in general. This girl is sitting by a mirror in a barber's shop which is financed by a micro credit union.

**6.7 A lack of portability may undermine return or circular migration**, as migrants who have spent a considerable amount of time in their host countries are likely to factor in the loss of benefits if they return to their countries of origin. Thus, a lack of portability of pensions can potentially undermine the development potential of international migration if the potential loss of earned benefits makes migrants more reluctant to return home and invest the skills and capital acquired abroad in their home economies.

**‘Irregular’-status jobs have no access to formal social protection and are often exploitative.**



# New initiatives in international migration

## Policy

Rather than a simplistic notion of 'brain drain' from developing countries, warranting barriers to emigration or some form of 'ethical recruitment' policy in destination countries, a much more nuanced view of skilled migration is required.

Countries need to identify and enable migration and development policies that support human resource development, rather than simply restricting mobility. Examples are identified in Bangladesh and Ghana.

## Key finding 7: Skilled migration

Skilled migration is largely a symptom, not a cause, of underdevelopment. A distinction needs to be drawn between countries that export skilled labour from a large pool of supply, and those which are losing high proportions of scarce and critical human resources.

**7** Our research on highly skilled migration focused on Albania, Bangladesh and Ghana. In particular in Ghana, a survey of 94 trainee doctors and 447 trainee nurses in 2005 provided valuable evidence on levels of migration and motivations for migration within the healthcare sector, and has fed into national-level discussions on how to approach the professional mobility of health workers. Research on the migration of skilled professionals undertaken by the Centre, including case studies on the mobility of health professionals in Ghana and Bangladesh, suggests that the consequences of skilled migration are far from clear.<sup>56</sup>

**7.1 Levels of emigration of newly-trained professionals from the South are high and growing;** there is, however, some evidence of return.

- In Ghana, evidence from professional associations suggests that the number of doctors seeking to leave the country each year as a proportion of those trained rose from 60 per cent in 1995 to over 90 per cent in 2002, averaging 69 per cent over the period. However, the proportion of nurses applying to work outside Ghana remained constant at around 20 per cent of those trained over the same period.<sup>57</sup>

- In Albania, survey evidence suggests that, in the period 1991–2005, more than half the lecturers and research workers in universities and research institutions in Albania had left the country, but just 10 per cent, had returned.<sup>58</sup>

- In Bangladesh, highly skilled return migrants feel that in their home country they can become ‘big fish in a small pond’. Some professionals make career sacrifices that, according to them, are compensated by the social gains from returning. Furthermore, successful professionals who return want the opportunity to contribute to development and society in their home country.<sup>59</sup>

**7.2 The data for examining flows of highly skilled migrants are inadequate** and generally based upon country of birth against country of present residence. Critical additional information is required to assess the extent and significance of any ‘brain drain’, including the country or place of training, and the length of stay in the place of present residence.

**7.3 The size of countries makes a critical difference to the impact of skilled emigration.** The loss of relatively few skilled professionals from small labour markets can have a disproportionately large impact compared to much larger flows from bigger economies. One way to address this is to explore labour-market integration between small economies.

**7.4 Policy recommendations based on causation between the number of skilled people leaving a country and deteriorating conditions in that country have to be treated with great care.** Simple correlations do not imply causation. Deteriorating conditions are caused by factors other than migration.

- Many skilled professionals leave the sector in which they trained, but not their home country. This results in ‘brain waste’, where people are not using the skills they have acquired.
- In the case of Albania, out of the return migrants who previously worked as lecturers and researchers, over three-quarters leave research and higher education and start working in the private sector.<sup>60</sup>
- In addition, skilled professionals are often not willing to work in places where their skills are the most needed – this is particularly the case in rural areas. No government in Bangladesh, in the last four decades, has been able to convince largely middle-class physicians to work in rural areas, despite regulation and pay incentives.

**7.5 Policies that aim to limit, control or divert the migration of the highly skilled from countries of origin are likely to end in failure.**

- Skilled migrants generally have the knowledge and resources to migrate should they wish to do so and if they are stopped from migrating to their chosen destination they may be forced into irregular channels in order to achieve their objectives.

- Ghanaian policy to limit the emigration of health professionals by offering improved working conditions appears to have been only partially effective at best. A policy initiative sought to double the wages of doctors to incite them to work in Ghana; however this has not significantly reduced their rate of emigration. Moreover, nurses are now demanding that the same policy be extended to their profession, which would be both ineffective in terms of curbing ‘brain drain’ and economically non-viable.
- Skilled professionals often cannot be productively employed at an appropriate level in their countries of origin. This helps to explain the massive exodus of teachers and lecturers from Albania, particularly at tertiary level.

**7.6 Expanding training opportunities in countries of origin could increase the supply of health workers at home and abroad.**

- The Overseas Employment Policy of the Government of Bangladesh has pursued the migration of nurses as an important strategy for entering into the highly skilled global labour market. However, our research has identified a number of institutions and regulations that constrain the training of quality nurses for local and international employment.
- The majority of nurses trained in Bangladesh are diploma nurses and only four institutions offer a Bachelors degree in nursing. Current government guidelines for the validation of nursing courses and the establishment of new nursing institutions have so far deterred private-sector participation. Nonetheless, a Task Force



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Josephine McKeever stands in her aunt's house, in Liberia, holding a photograph of her mother, a nurse currently working in Ghana. Twenty per cent of Ghanaian nurses apply to US and UK hospitals, leaving a skills gap.

established following the presentation of our research findings has reiterated the point that the policy should facilitate participation of the private sector and not impose conditions that reduce the scope for such participation.

- At an individual level, survey evidence from trainee doctors and nurses in Ghana showed over half (58 per cent) of those interviewed plan to migrate after completion of their undergraduate studies. The most prominent motive for skilled migration was the search for 'further training' (38 per cent of respondents), significantly higher than 'improved working conditions' (28 per cent), 'more money' (20 per cent) or finding 'a better managed healthcare system' (15 per cent).<sup>61</sup> Amongst trainee nurses in particular, whilst 71 per cent described the nursing profession in Ghana as frustrating and

stressful, skills upgrading still emerged as the most important reason offered for emigrating (see *Key Finding 3*).

- Following the establishment of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons in 2003, more doctors appear to be staying in Ghana to upgrade their skills. The college now has between 400 and 600 students.

7.7 Nonetheless, **policies that provide state funding for high-level training may need to be reappraised**, with training for the global market to be funded for the most part from private sources and state funding concentrated on the training for those skills most needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In doing this, greater attention could be paid to issues of sectoral and regional imbalances in some countries suffering from brain-drain.



## Policy

Policies aimed at poverty reduction in areas affected by migration need to recognise that both access to and experience of migration are highly gendered. There are opportunities for policies to build on the transformational potential of migration in terms of gender relations, but the direction of such transformations should not be assumed.



## Key finding 8: Migration and gender

Migration streams, migration work destinations and migration impacts show marked differences between men and women that are not accurately described by the notion of a ‘feminisation of migration’. Migration can both exacerbate the impact of existing gendered roles and bring about significant changes in gender norms.

8 Gender has represented a cross-cutting theme for all of the Centre’s work, as well as a specific focus for some research projects. It is a topic that has gained growing attention over the last decade in migration and development policy and practice, with the establishment of a Global Migration and Gender Network in 2005,<sup>62</sup> and increasing reference to the ‘feminisation of migration’ in international fora and some academic writing. In practice, women represented 47 per cent of international migrants already in 1960, and the share grew only marginally to just under 49 per cent in 2000; moreover, the share of women in international migration from less-developed countries remained more or less unchanged over this 40-year period, at around 45 per cent.<sup>63</sup>

The conditions of work and regulatory framework for domestic workers – a largely female occupation – have been a specific focus of research in Cairo, where foreign domestic workers from Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Nigeria are a substantial minority of the large domestic-servant workforce.

This section seeks to bring together findings relating to gender from across empirical and review work carried out by the Centre, focusing both on gendered patterns of migration, and on the way in which the consequences of migration are often differentiated by gender. It demonstrates how gender and migration interact in complex ways.

8.1 Our research on migrant children shows that **the motives for child migration, and the type of work at destination are strongly differentiated by gender.**

- In several cases, girls are migrating at younger ages than boys, mainly to work as live-in domestic helpers, often with relatives.<sup>64</sup> However, in Karnataka, runaway migration is confined to boys and migrating girls are very few. There, girls play a very minor role in the decision-making about their movements and work exclusively as domestic servants.<sup>65</sup>
- Migrant boys and girls in West Africa and Bangladesh want capital to start small enterprises, but boys also want consumer items such as watches, bikes and radios, and they want to learn skills. In contrast, many girls speak of saving in order to assemble a decent ‘suitcase’ (Ghana) or dowry for their marriage.<sup>66</sup>

Cultural and religious differences affect the impact of migration on women.

8.2 There are also **important gender differences** in the propensity to migrate more generally, and **to choose particular migrant destinations**.

Gender differences in work destinations are influenced by labour markets, and education, and also by norms about family responsibilities and relations between the genders.

- In Albania, men are 20 per cent more likely to consider migrating internationally than women. This is particularly true in households with dependent children aged 5–8, where women are less likely, but men are significantly more likely, to consider migrating.<sup>67</sup>
- In South Asia, migration streams are strongly gendered, with women engaging largely with domestic and agricultural work in Jharkhand (India) and domestic and garment work in Bangladesh. Men on the other hand are engaged with a range of manual work in agriculture, construction and factories. In Karnataka, the vast majority of rural out-migrants aged under 18 are boys. Similarly, in West Bengal, migration is highly gendered: almost all of those migrating are men.
- In some communities in Bangladesh, female migration is often seen as an appropriate short-term strategy contributing to survival and household maintenance rather than accumulation and social mobility. In contrast, long-term international male migration is encouraged because it is more rewarding and can contribute to the long-term economic strategies of families. Male migration over longer distances is seen as of higher status in terms of social mobility and

respect, even though the quality and conditions of work overseas are harsh and demeaning.<sup>68</sup>

8.3 By migrating as domestic workers, women are able to access paid employment. **However, female migrants remain very vulnerable in contexts where national labour legislation specifically excludes domestic work from regulation.**

- The movement of migrant tribal women domestic workers to cities in India has rapidly expanded over the last decade and reflects a diversity of experience from total exploitation to fair remuneration. The conditions of work, however, remain personal and servile; leisure is absent and respect lacking.<sup>69</sup>
- Domestic workers often experience exploitation. For example, in a study in Cairo, conditions of work were found to be poor, wages low and hours long. Forty-three per cent of Sudanese migrants earned \$100 or less per month and 75 per cent of live-in domestic workers worked 12+ hours, with 44 per cent working 15 or more hours per day. Over a third worked seven days a week. However, they are allowed to leave their employers, who tend not to hold their passports, so they can seek employment elsewhere in Egypt.<sup>70</sup>
- Domestic workers also experience abuse. For example, a third of domestic workers in the Cairo study were called abusive names, usually by their female employers; 27 per cent reported physical abuse – such as slapping, hitting, pushing, punching, kicking, pulling or burning with a cigarette – whilst 10 per cent had experienced some kind of sexual



With their husbands away working, women are often forced, through insufficient food, to resort to low-paid seasonal agricultural work such as clearing cotton fields.

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harassment, including rape and attempted rape, by the male employer or a male family member where they worked.<sup>71</sup>

#### 8.4 Cultural and religious differences affect the impact of migration on women.

For example, low-caste migrant Hindu women were found to have taken jobs outside their homes in slums in urban Rajasthan, usually as low-paid domestic workers, but Muslim migrant women had not. The two groups of mothers report quite different impacts on their ability to feed and look after their children as a result, with Hindu women saying they provide for their children better and have

more individual control, whereas Muslim women have seen a decline in the quality of food and care they can give their children.

#### 8.5 The same study showed that internal migration from rural areas to the urban slums of Rajasthan can have negative impacts on health.

Migrants are less likely than longer-term residents to be proactive on health issues. They are submerged by the more immediate economic concerns of securing employment and income in a context where there is also little support from kin. In particular, migrant mothers are more

likely to experience child loss compared to non-migrant, urban women. This is because they return to their rural parental homes to give birth, which increases risk. Poor tracking facilities in the health system add to their vulnerability.

#### 8.6 The **impact on wives when husbands work away can be profound.**

- Many women who stay behind experience considerable anxiety and insecurity. Almost all the wives interviewed in West Bengal report an increasing and not necessarily welcome reliance on their own or their husbands' kin. Those with husbands away find it particularly difficult to travel to get urgent and necessary medical treatment. Many also find themselves with insufficient food, forcing them to resort to low-paid seasonal agricultural work.

#### 8.7 **Migration can lead to differentiated and complex changes in gender norms;**

this is evidenced in cases of voluntary migration in Bangladesh and constituted a major theme in a project on Southern Sudanese forced migration and return.

- Research in Bangladesh suggests that there are longer-term impacts of international male labour migration on local norms about gender. The considerable status and value attached to men willing to work overseas is changing ideas about masculinity. Ideas about femininity are changing too: dowries are increasing, as is men's control over women, who are discouraged from work outside the home; motherhood and care are also becoming more central to women's identity.<sup>72</sup>

- These changes are facilitated by *madrassa* education, valued for both boys and girls, but with different justifications. Knowledge of the Arabic language was seen to facilitate Gulf migration for boys, and to help girls become more religious-minded, caring and dutiful in a context of likely male absence over long periods of time. Women's *madrassa* education is thus not seen as a threat to their husbands, as it is not expected to lead to greater female autonomy or decision-making.<sup>73</sup>

- Being in a refugee camp or in another country had loosened some gender norms, through interaction with other nationalities and cultural practices, wider access to rights for women, and much greater access to education and incomes for girls and women. Educational and economic empowerment in camps has challenged Southern Sudanese gender practices and opened up possibilities for more gender-equal relations.<sup>74</sup>

- However, returning to Southern Sudan after many years' absence is a complex process, not least because home communities have been changed irreversibly by the experience of war and displacement. Returning young men have found themselves subject to misconceptions, jealousies and tensions between returnees and those who stayed behind and often felt discriminated against by the local authorities when they tried to get jobs in government education and health systems. However, gender norms in Southern Sudan bear down the most heavily on women and girls, where return represents the shrinking of their new freedoms and rights.

### Key finding 9:

## Migrant diasporas

Diaspora engagement can contribute to the development of countries of origin but this is a highly politicised arena. Such engagement includes the transfer of financial capital, and the exchange of skills and knowledge, and does not require migrants to return to be effective and sustainable.

## Policy

Pro-active policies in origin countries to mobilise diaspora can be helpful, but attention also needs to be paid to issues of citizenship, trade and investment regulation and corruption.



9 The Centre's research on diasporas, like all areas of our research, has been driven by the issues of most importance to countries of origin and migrants themselves. The bulk of migration of significance to poor people and to poverty takes place within developing countries, and within the Global South (see *Key Finding 1*), but diaspora policies have been mainly orientated towards those in the Global North, and are sometimes driven by other agendas. Our work has looked both to review experiences of different kinds of diaspora policy globally, and to analyse the particular context and experience of diaspora engagement in Bangladesh, Ghana and Albania. This work suggests a number of important considerations for governments seeking to link diaspora populations with development strategies.<sup>75</sup>

9.1 **Diaspora populations are often interested in contributing to development strategies in their countries of origin, but may choose highly varied forms of engagement,** ranging from small-scale community initiatives to major investments and transfers of knowledge.

9.2 Research in Bangladesh shows that the **transfer of financial and social capital by 'return migrants' and 'transnationals' enhances human capital and contributes to the development of the sending state.**

9.3 Migrants don't have to return permanently to make a contribution to development but, where they do, **sustainability of return is best measured in terms of the extent to which individual returnees are able to reintegrate in their home societies, and of the wider impact of return** on macro-economic and political indicators, rather than on narrow judgements about whether returnees subsequently re-emigrate after their return.<sup>76</sup>

- Exchange of skills and knowledge is not necessarily limited to permanent or even temporary return – for example, the Alb-Shkenca Forum is made up of Albanian scholars who reside both inside and outside the country, but all of whom are looking for ways to promote progress in science and technology in Albania.

9.4 **The extent of diaspora contributions that promote development depend in part on the size and investment capability of the diaspora population, but also on the political, economic and institutional climate of the country of origin.** If the investment climate is not good, then incentives to diasporas alone will not produce the desired outcomes.

9.5 Nevertheless, **pro-active policies in origin countries to mobilise the skills of diaspora populations can be helpful.** Examples of such policies include the promotion of temporary and permanent return schemes and incentives; the development of web-based databases

and resources to facilitate job searches or skills registers; and the promotion of events or prizes to honour diaspora members and facilitate 'homecoming'.

- An increasing number of states are extending the right to vote to diaspora populations. Such extra-territorial voting, in conjunction with other rights extended to non-resident citizens, provides one way in which emigrants can maintain and develop legitimate forms of political transnationalism and allows states to retain and build highly productive connections with diaspora groups.<sup>77</sup>
- It is important also to note, however, that such engagement may not be supportive of the leadership and/or structures in place in their country of origin: diasporas

are often actively engaged in opposition politics, and may adopt extreme positions that foster conflict and violence.

- Dual citizenship on its own does not appear to enhance diasporas' contributions, but it does ease regulatory hurdles for those wishing to engage, and increases efficiency once a diaspora member has invested in his or her home country.
- Diaspora communities are not homogenous and, in response to this, some states have chosen to target specific sections of their diaspora populations. For example, Albania has chosen to target members of the Albanian diaspora who have the training and skills necessary to work in education, health and agriculture.<sup>78</sup>



The dome and minaret of Glasgow Mosque and Islamic Centre contrast with skyscrapers of the Gorbals area of Glasgow.



# Migration policies



Key finding 10:  
**Migration  
policy  
analysis**

Policy development on migration remains fragmentary, and there is still a lack of consensus on what pro-poor migration policies should look like in poor countries.

**10** A significant focus of the Centre's work has been on policy analysis, both at an international and a national level. This work has focused on a global analysis of the extent and ways in which migration is addressed in poor countries' broader poverty reduction strategies, as well as on engagement with international and national debates on migration and development policy; regional analysis of labour migration agreements in the Mediterranean; and national-level analysis of emerging policies on migration and poverty, notably in Bangladesh. In addition, all our research has sought to identify relevant policy findings and recommendations which are highlighted in each section.

From 1999–2008, some 59 developing countries produced a **'Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper' (PRSP)** as part of a shift to identifying routes for pro-poor growth and development, with 25 of these countries producing a second, revised PRSP during this period. Comparative analysis of these PRSPs by Centre researchers sought to examine whether they provide evidence of a shift in the way that the relationship between migration and poverty is conceptualised and appropriate policies are developed.

**10.1 Although most PRSPs mention migration, there remains a heavy emphasis on how a lack of development causes migration,** rather than on identifying the potential for migration to represent a route out of poverty. Indeed, many PRSPs describe the development consequences of migration in highly negative terms.<sup>79</sup>

- Very few PRSPs discuss present evidence on the development impacts of internal migration, and most assume these impacts to be negative, in spite of the significance of internal migration for poor people.
- Despite some attention to the potential poverty reduction role played by migrant workers' remittances, few PRSPs develop policies that address remittances, or other ways (e.g. diaspora engagement) in which migrants or migration could be mobilised to support poverty reduction efforts.
- There is a disjuncture between poor countries' approaches and policies on migration, as recorded in PRSPs, and national policies on migration as reported to the UN Population Division. Moreover, there is no evidence of an increasing focus on migration in PRSPs over time.

- A very small number of examples of 'good practice' in incorporating migration into PRSPs includes Bangladesh, Albania and Sri Lanka. In Bangladesh, for example, discussion of the effects of migration draws on research evidence, including community-level studies in poor communities, as well as time-series macro-data relating to migration, notably remittance trends over time.

Our policy analysis has also looked at bilateral labour migration agreements. The research has sought to address whether these might form the basis for binding agreements under GATS commitments.

**10.2 Formal labour migration agreements cover only a small proportion of total emigrants**, whilst many labour agreements are informal and not public. The limited information available on bilateral temporary labour migration agreements and the importance of flexibility in implementing them suggest that it would be extremely difficult to use them as a basis for binding agreements into GATS commitments.

- However, based on analysis of two publicly available labour migration agreements between Morocco and Spain and Egypt and Italy, five key considerations for assessing the impact of labour agreements on development in the country of origin were identified: whether they are



public or private; how long migrants are allowed to spend abroad; whether they include women, or only men; whether they match the skills of migrants to the jobs on offer; and whether they provide security of stay.

- It was also found that macro-economic conditions and the extent of return influence the significance of bilateral agreements in terms of development outcomes.

Paris, France, 8 April 2009: people gathered to protest against a law which prohibits the provision of aid to illegal immigrants. The banner says 'Let them live here'.

## Migration Policy Engagement – Working With Governments

RMMRU has advised the Bangladesh government on a range of migration-related issues, including student migration and the role of consular services. Here we draw out findings from work on the role of the recruitment industry in migration:

- There are about 800 formal recruitment agencies in Bangladesh. Despite this, aspiring **migrants for short-term contract work prefer to use informal agents**, because they are known to them, have a reputation for successfully facilitating migration and are generally located in the vicinity of their home or place of work.
- There is a **strong profit incentive for recruitment agencies to focus on the migration of unskilled and low-skilled workers** rather than skilled workers or professionals. Yet government mechanisms (rules and institutions) to regulate recruitment agencies in this area are generally inappropriate and inadequate, whilst the sector's trade body is unwilling to bring order to and take action against errant agencies.
- **The high cost of migration has been identified as a major problem** faced by Bangladeshi migrants. There are major differences between government-approved fees, and the actual cost of migration, reflecting the existence of several tiers of rent-seeking intermediaries located both in countries of origin and of destination.
- The government's policy of **not allowing recruitment agencies to open branch offices**, the lack of initiative of the recruitment agents to bring about changes in that policy and the propensity of aspiring migrants to depend on trustworthy persons have created a condition for informal intermediaries to play a decisive role in the recruitment of workers.
- In cases of 'failed' migration **it is generally difficult for migrants to seek redress from agencies, because of the absence of documents** laying out terms and conditions of work and monetary transactions. Success in securing compensation depends to a large extent on the capacity of the cheated migrant to mobilise his or her social contacts. Cases were found, however, where informal agents had contingency arrangements in place to compensate failed migrants.

# End notes

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