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**Migration and Pro-Poor Policy in West Africa**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	African Development Bank
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Observer Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (of the UN)
GLSS	Ghana Living Standards Survey
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMP	International Migration Policy Programme
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (Ghana)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USDOS	United States Department of State

## ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the findings of a survey conducted by the Sussex Centre for Migration Research on migration and pro-poor policy in Africa. The survey covered existing literature, and discussions with DFID country offices across the continent, and was conducted in early 2004. The paper is complemented by three separate papers, on Africa in general, East and Southern Africa, which are published separately by the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, and together by the Department for International Development.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

West Africa has a long history of population mobility, both regionally and internationally. Linked with factors as diverse as long-distance trade, the search for pasture, urbanisation and the growth of administrative centres, the demands of mining, industrial production and plantation agriculture, armed conflict, land degradation, drought and rural poverty, migration has played a major part in shaping settlement patterns. It is estimated that one third of West Africans live outside their village of birth. Contemporary West African migrants are found in significant numbers around the world, with major consequences for poverty.

### 1.1 Engaging with West African Diasporas

West African governments have recently sought to prioritise either the return of their diasporas, and/or the promotion of financial investments in the country by those living abroad. However, there may also be scope to facilitate the trading and business networks that some diaspora communities have developed abroad in a way that is of benefit to West African economies. One study of West Africans in New York shows how they have successfully marketed authentic 'African' products to the large African American community of the city. This suggests that there may be some scope for increased trade flows that could benefit the region.

### 1.2 Alternative Views on Trafficking

Trafficking in West Africa is seen by many agencies as 'pervasive and growing', leading to both child labour and sexual exploitation of women. However, problems with definitions of trafficking,

and especially 'traffickers' are highlighted by a recent study of the causes, context and consequences of youth migration from central Mali. The types of hardship experienced by migrant children may be similar whether or not they cross international borders. The use of an intermediary may also be obligatory for any child wishing to migrate, yet it is often impossible to determine whether these intermediaries have an intention to exploit. Often NGO and government initiatives to return trafficked children to their villages have been met with unhappiness from children, incredulity from parents, and teasing and humiliation from the children's peer group.

### 1.3 Knowledge Gaps

A number of knowledge gaps remain in relation to migration within and from West Africa:

- Some countries, such as Ghana, have relatively good population and migration statistics, but the same is not true for countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia that are emerging from periods of armed conflict, and where social research capacity has been severely weakened.
- In Nigeria, there is also a major dearth of data on migration, reflecting the poor quality of social and demographic statistics more generally. However, with a new census planned for this year, there is the prospect of improved data becoming available, and resources could be allocated to ensure it is properly analysed.
- A particularly poorly understood area is that of the migration of children, whose movement is often denied or characterised as forced, but which in reality may be somewhat more complex. Attention could usefully be focused on seeking to understand these flows, while at the same time prioritising the reduction of harm and exploitation rather than the outright prevention of all child migration.

### 1.4 Can Policy on Migration in West Africa be Effective?

Regional policy initiatives are starting to appear in West Africa that hold out the prospect of more effective policies on migration. The Sahel and West Africa Club of the OECD has recently published a study on West Africa in the context of globalisation, which includes attention to migration. It also organised a conference in 2003 on the Mano River Union region and Côte d'Ivoire which explored the relationship between migration, displacement and conflict.

Discussions on regional integration are also advancing, and this presents an opportunity to raise the issue of regional mobility, both of skilled professionals and unskilled workers. However, fears about migration, including within countries, are real and need to be addressed. For example, policies to promote improved tenure rights for poor people over land, forests and mineral resources remain divisive, at least in part since they can exacerbate tensions between migrants and 'indigenous' populations in particular areas.

## 2 REGION-WIDE ISSUES

West Africa has a long history of population mobility, both internally and externally. Côte d'Ivoire is one of the top ten countries of destination for migrants worldwide according to figures collated by the IOM, with some 3 million immigrants making up a quarter of its population. Migrants have also historically moved to Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana and the Gambia. Major countries of emigration are Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali. According to De Haan (2000: 17), around one-third of West Africans live outside their district or village of birth, whilst 42 per cent of the total number of international migrants residing in Africa are located in West Africa (United Nations Population Division 2002). Historically, labourers have moved to work in plantation agriculture, the mining industry, centres of oil and industrial production, and administrative centres. Trade, war and harsh physical environments have also led to highly mobile livelihoods across the region (Arthur 1991).

Over a thirty-year period from 1960 to 1990, it has been estimated that international migration alone involved 7.2 million people, excluding Nigeria, representing around 11 per cent of the median population of the region in that period (Kalasa 1994: 23). More recent UNDESA figures suggest that most West African countries were net losers of population in 1995-2000, with the exception of Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Liberia and Togo (Table 1).

**Table 1: Selected Development and Migration Indicators for West African Countries**

Country	Population (millions) 2000	GDP per capita (US\$ PPP) 2000 <sup>1</sup>	Human Development Index (HDI) 2000 <sup>2</sup>	Migrant stock (%) 2000 <sup>3</sup>	Average annual net migration rate (per 1000) 1995-2000
Benin	6.3	990	0.420	1.6	-3.2
Burkina Faso	11.5	976	0.325	9.7	-5.5
Cape Verde	0.4	4,863	0.715	2.4	-2.5
Côte d'Ivoire	16.0	1,630	0.428	14.6	0.8
Gambia	1.3	1,649	0.405	14.2	9.1
Ghana	19.3	1,964	0.548	3.2	-1.2
Guinea	8.2	1,982	0.414	9.1	-6.2
Guinea Bissau	1.2	755	0.349	1.6	-2.9
Liberia	2.9	..	..	5.5	36.5
Mali	11.4	797	0.386	0.4	-4.7
Mauritania	2.7	1,677	0.438	2.3	3.4
Niger	10.8	746	0.277	1.1	-0.1
Nigeria	113.9	896	0.462	0.7	-0.2
Senegal	9.4	1,510	0.431	3.0	-1.1
Sierra Leone	4.4	490	0.275	1.1	-7.8
Togo	4.5	1,442	0.493	4.0	6.1

*Source:* Figures compiled by Jørgen Carling from UNDP and UN Population Division.

Notes: <sup>1</sup> Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) is an adjustment of the Gross Domestic Product to account for price differences across countries and allow comparison of real incomes.

<sup>2</sup> The Human Development Index is calculated on the basis of statistics on life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, gross educational enrolment ratio and GDP per capita (PPP, \$US).

<sup>3</sup> Refers to the percentage of the population born outside the country, except figures for Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, which refer to percentage of the population with foreign citizenship.

In the latter two countries, net immigration in 1995-2000 reflects a return of nationals, whilst the high migrant stocks shown in Table 1 for Burkina Faso, Liberia and Togo probably represent nationals of those countries who were born abroad and subsequently moved 'back' to their country of nationality, rather than immigration by nationals of other countries.

Despite long-established patterns of migration in the region, it is worth noting that there has been considerable volatility in West African migration patterns over recent years:

First, expulsions of migrants from Ghana in 1969, Nigeria in 1983 and 1985, and violence against foreigners living in Côte d'Ivoire in the aftermath of the 2000 elections has led to significant return movements of West African migrants from neighbouring states, with some fundamental impacts on migration and settlement patterns.

Second, conflicts, notably in Liberia and Sierra Leone have made West Africa host to one of the continent's larger refugee populations, although significant returns have now occurred both to these countries, and to some other countries affected by civil strife, including Togo, Mali and Guinea-Bissau.

**Box 1: Diversification in International Flows from West Africa**

In the last year for which official data on new arrivals was available in all EU countries, Italy had become the most important destination for West Africans who moved legally, with just under 10,000 entrants. Of these, roughly a third came from Senegal, and a further 20 per cent each from Nigeria and Ghana. The next largest European destination was Portugal, with just over 5,000 entrants, the vast majority from Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau. Portugal was followed by the UK and France. Germany, which had admitted more than 10,000 West Africans in 1996, with two-thirds of these coming from Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, fell to just 1,440 entrants in 1999, though rising to over 5,000 in 2001, whilst France saw a dramatic decline from over 13,000 entrants in 1998 to just under 4,000 in 1999. In contrast, the numbers going legally to the UK, Spain and Portugal rose considerably at the end of the 1990s.

*Source:* Data from Eurostat

- Third, whilst urbanisation accelerated in the period 1960-80, it is thought to have slowed considerably since then, if Nigeria is excluded from the analysis (Kalasa 1994: 14).<sup>1</sup> Moreover, although urbanisation has occurred, rural population densities across the region have nonetheless continued to rise.

Movement to Europe and North America also appears to have been higher in West Africa than in other parts of the continent. Figures from the 2000 US census show that West Africans made up more than half of those born in sub-Saharan Africa, with most entering the country since 1990. Data from EUROSTAT and other sources for the period 1985-93 suggests that 415,000 West Africans already lived in Europe at that time, around a third (128,000) in France, followed by the UK (82,000), Germany (74,000) and Italy (63,000) (Robin 1997).

Migration routes to Europe have traditionally followed old colonial linkages, with the bulk of West Africans in France coming from francophone countries, and those in the UK coming from Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia and Sierra Leone. However, diversification of flows was already evident in 1990

<sup>1</sup> Nigeria is excluded primarily because of the poor quality of its population statistics.

both to other European destinations (see Box 1), and from a wider range of West African countries of origin (e.g. Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea). EUROSTAT data suggests around 60 per cent of West Africans in Europe are aged 20-39. They also indicate that migration to Europe has been on a distinct upward trajectory in the last decade, although the absence of flow data for some countries makes time series comparisons problematic.

Yet figures for legal migration clearly only tell a part of the story. Legal entry to the US from Africa has remained fairly level over the last decade, but substantial communities of West Africans have built up, including people entering and overstaying on tourist or student visas who are not counted by official immigration statistics. It has been estimated that there are as many as 35,000 to 40,000 Senegalese in the New York area alone (Ba 2002), many of whom are believed to have entered or remained in the US illegally. Data on the Senegalese diaspora have been compiled by Diatta and Mbow, showing over half a million Senegalese living outside Senegal, at least half of whom are not officially registered in their country of destination (Diatta and Mbow 1999).

**Table 2: Senegalese Migrants Worldwide**

Destination	Registered	Non-registered	Total
Côte d'Ivoire	50,000	100,000	150,000
France	45,000	60,000	105,000
Gambia			100,000
Italy			60,000
Mauritania	12,000	45,000	57,000
Egypt	2,000	30,000	32,000
North America	3,200	15,000	18,200
Iberian peninsular			Over 15,000
Gabon			15,000
Germany	1,500	5,000	Over 6,500
Total	113,700	255,000	Over 558,700

*Source: Diatta and Mbow, 1999*

A number of key themes emerge in relation to migration in West Africa. These include:

- Substantial levels of mobility, internally, regionally and internationally, with long historical roots, and impacting significantly on the poor. This includes substantial rural-rural as well as rural-urban flows.

- A diversification of migration flows in recent years (see Box 1), with countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and more recently Côte d'Ivoire undergoing a 'reverse migration transition', moving from being countries of immigration to countries of emigration
- Emerging concern, but also controversy, over the level and nature of 'trafficking' within the region (see Boxes 2 and 4)
- A history of expulsion of migrant workers in some countries, and a continuing high degree of political sensitivity over migration (see Box 3)
- Attempts by governments in a number of countries to reach out to diaspora groups living in Europe and North America (see Box 5)
- Continuing concern about forced migration both regionally and internally, although conflict resolution efforts in places like Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Mali have already produced substantial return movements.

In the following sections, these themes are merged both in relation to their impact on the poor, and in terms of long-distance international migration that tends to be the preserve of more educated, less-poor individuals. Trends in francophone West Africa and the region as a whole are briefly reviewed before going on to sections that deal with Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone and Liberia in more detail.

## 2.1 Importance of Migration to the Poor

Across West Africa, migration represents a significant livelihood strategy for poor people. As noted above, this is a factor that is recognised in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in Cape Verde, Senegal and Niger, but it is certainly not restricted to these countries (e.g. until the recent civil war in Côte d'Ivoire, around a quarter of Burkina Faso's GDP came from remittances from that country (Kapur

### Box 2: Alternative Views on Trafficking

Problems with definitions of trafficking, and especially 'traffickers' are highlighted by a recent study of the causes, context and consequences of youth migration from central Mali. This study suggests that the types of hardship experienced by migrant children were similar whether or not they had crossed international borders, or could be considered to have been trafficked, whilst many revealed positive migration experiences. It also shows how in a sample of over 100 Malian children working in Abidjan and the cocoa, coffee, cotton, yam and cashew plantations of Côte d'Ivoire, all of whom had been identified as victims of trafficking, only four turned out to have actually been handled by a trafficker.

The study highlights how the focus on 'traffickers' is problematic in the West African context, where use of an intermediary is almost obligatory for any child wishing to migrate. However, it is often impossible to determine whether these intermediaries have an intention to exploit. It also notes that NGO and government initiatives to return trafficked children to their villages have been met with unhappiness from children, incredulity from parents, and teasing and humiliation from the children's peer group.

*Source:* Castle and Diarra (2003)

2003: 23). Evidence from a recent study of remittance behaviour by over 800 immigrant household heads in Abidjan suggests that monetary transfers to family members both outside the country, and those living in other parts of Côte d'Ivoire, remained substantial even during the civil war, and mainly took the form of cash transfers to support basic household expenditure (Toto 2003).

In Senegal, a country widely acknowledged to have benefited from migration, it is estimated that nearly \$1 million is transferred to the Bank de l'Habitat du Senegal from Libreville every month (Diatta and Mbow 1999). Somewhere between 30 and 80 per cent of household budgets in Senegal are said to comprise of remittances (Van Doorn 2002). These transfers affect all social classes. Roy Stacy, Program Director of the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) Network, noted in evidence to a recent congressional caucus that deregulation, liberalisation of trade and freer movement of labour in West Africa as part of the Sahel Development Plan had led to:

'a spatial redistribution of people with approximately 8.0 million Sahelians dispersing into other parts of West Africa. Many of these migrants are now an important source of capital, ideas and improved agriculture management techniques which flow back into the Sahel as a result of the livelihoods diversification that has occurred with the labor mobility (Stacey 2003).

In contrast, restriction of mobility has been seen by World Bank livestock specialists as a cause of land degradation as it leads to conversion of grazing areas to cropland (De Haan and Gauthier undated).

Internal migration, between and within urban and rural areas, continues to account for most migratory movements in West Africa. But in some countries, such as Burkina Faso, international migration outweighs internal migration (Traoré and Bocquier 1998). Many individuals as well as entire families move out of hostile areas characterised by drought and low agricultural productivity in search of richer lands to farm or for a remunerated job in town. Many of these movements are temporary or seasonal. They help the rural poor in supplementing farm earnings during the off-season, while keeping rights over their land (Findley 1997). Destinations have become more diversified and migrant itineraries more complex partly due to changes in wage-labour employment opportunities.

Rural to urban migration has contributed to the growth of cities, but a series of national surveys conducted simultaneously in eight West African countries in the 1990s shows that urban growth rates have declined in the region compared to the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> These surveys also reveal the prominent role played by female migration in contemporary urbanisation processes.

In turn, rural-rural flows, often (but not always) over shorter distances and for a few months rather than years, may often be the most important to the poor, particularly in times of economic hardship. A study in the Sahel during the drought years of the mid 1980s found that as the drought took hold, long distance migration actually declined, possibly because people could not afford the up-front investment involved in migration. However, temporary circulation over shorter distances increased considerably (Findley 1994). Such 'distress' migration may be a key factor in keeping poor households from starvation. More generally there is a relative paucity of studies focusing on rural to rural seasonal flows, although some recent studies are noted in the section on Ghana below.

Whilst migration has a number of positive benefits, problematic aspects of migration are noted in the literature that may specifically impact the poorest. The FAO has argued that mobility of members of farming households is partly responsible for seasonal labour shortages and an ageing of on-farm populations, with a negative effect on agricultural productivity.<sup>3</sup> In addition, trafficking in West Africa (see Box 2) is seen by many agencies as 'pervasive and growing', falling into two main types:

- the trafficking of children mainly for domestic and agricultural work both across and within national borders; and
- the trafficking in women and children for sexual exploitation, mainly to outside the region.<sup>4</sup>

However, although figures are available on the extent of these two phenomena, they are often unreliable.

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<sup>2</sup> Representative surveys were conducted in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Nigeria. See Traoré and Bocquier 1998

<sup>3</sup> 'The progression from arable cropping to integrated crop and livestock production: current agricultural production systems in West Africa, at <http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/004/X6543E/X6543E03.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> See [http://www.afrol.com/News2001/afr027\\_human\\_trafficking.htm](http://www.afrol.com/News2001/afr027_human_trafficking.htm)

## 2.2 Migration Policies in West Africa

Within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) there is technically freedom of movement, and significant numbers of West African nationals are living in neighbouring countries. Yet such movement is not always officially recognised, or indeed tolerated. The history of expulsions of foreign workers is reflected in increasingly restrictive attitudes in key countries of immigration such as Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, as well as widespread harassment and denial of rights. One response has been proposals at a regional level to introduce ECOWAS passports, which would provide an opportunity for holders to gain residence, employment and other rights in other ECOWAS countries<sup>5</sup>, but such passports probably remain some way off.

There are several areas in which policies and initiatives have been developed. First, regional action to address conflict and mass displacement has included ECOMOG interventions in conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and regional efforts to bring a resolution to the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire. In addition, a number of more recent initiatives to end conflict and promote development across the area of the Mano River Region and in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire were discussed at a recent conference of the Sahel and West Africa Club of the OECD, recognising the extent to which national borders in the region cut across ethnic divisions and traditional migration routes (OECD 2003).

Second, there has been considerable regional attention to the issue of trafficking. ECOWAS members adopted a Political Declaration and Action Plan against trafficking in human beings in the West African region in December 2001, which called, amongst other things, for the creation of special anti-trafficking police units and a regional task force to deal with the issue (Embassy, US 2001).

A review of national policies by UNICEF in 2002 has highlighted varied responses and perceptions, ranging from Mali, which was the first country in the region to adopt a 'National Emergency Plan to Fight against Child Trafficking', to Benin, which has so far taken no action, and Burkina Faso, where a plan is still under discussion and policy interest is low (UNICEF 2002). Bilateral

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<sup>5</sup> 'A new passport to regional development', 21 May 2003, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200305210167.html>

agreements on combating trafficking have been reached between Côte d'Ivoire and Mali and Burkina Faso, and between Benin and Nigeria and Togo.<sup>6</sup> However, such policies, based on the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* can be questioned (Castle and Diarra 2003) (see Box 2).

Third, across West Africa, there have been efforts by governments to reach out to diaspora communities in Europe and North America, largely with an eye to encouraging their return to, or investment in their country of origin. These are described in more detail in sections on individual countries below, but there are also some important initiatives from francophone countries, including some that involve the private sector and/or civil society.

The *World Migration Report* relates how three Paris-based banks have offered special transfer schemes to Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Senegal with much lower fees than money courier services. At the same time, the phenomenon of co-development or '*coopération décentralisée*' in which development initiatives are funded by migrants through home town associations or local NGOs is widespread across the region. Such 'translocal' initiatives fund work on irrigation, drinking water, roads, health centres, schools, literacy programmes, and measures to combat environmental degradation, and sometimes include mechanisms to lever public funds, such as town twinning arrangements between municipalities in Europe and towns or villages in Africa (Grillo and Riccio 2003).

### 2.3 Key Issues and Policy Gaps

Policy initiatives have been developed in several areas, but various gaps remain at a regional level. First, although individual governments have sought to encourage return of their diasporas, there may also be scope to facilitate the trading and business networks that some diaspora communities have developed abroad (e.g. a study of West Africans in New York shows how they have successfully marketed authentic 'African' products to the large African American community of the city, in a way that suggests some scope for increased trade flows that could benefit the region (Stoller 2003)).

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Nikhil Roy, Anti-Slavery International, 12/02/04

Second, there is in practice relatively little in the way of regional policy initiatives on migration and development. Some steps toward a more effective management of migration have been taken with the establishment of a regional consultative process. One of the outcomes of this process, which was initiated in 2000 by the IOM and the International Migration Policy Programme (IMP)<sup>7</sup>, is the Dakar Declaration signed by most West African countries and serving as a plan of action to promote the protection of migrants and to strengthen their role in development.<sup>8</sup>

Whereas this kind of process has the advantage of fostering an open dialogue among governments on migration issues, it has been criticised for being too informal and non-binding. There are also some bilateral agreements between West African countries, which could be expanded (e.g. Senegal signed a protocol agreement with Gabon in 1987, which secured social security benefits for the children of Senegalese workers, whether or not they were living with these workers in Gabon (Diatta and Mbow 1999). Such bilateral agreements across important migration 'dyads' (e.g. Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire, Togo-Ghana, etc.) could be valuable in promoting migrant workers' rights and enhancing the potential benefits of intra-regional migration.

Third, whilst at a national level, it has been common for concern to be focused on limiting the 'brain drain' of nationals and (more recently) linking with migrant diasporas, there is considerable scope for enhanced cooperation across West Africa to create a more integrated labour market for professionals within the region, in order to provide clearer paths for career development and training at a regional level.

### 3 NIGERIA

As noted above, Nigeria has been a major international migration destination in the past, although this flow was affected by civil strife in the 1970s, and was dramatically reversed with the expulsion of about a million Ghanaian and other foreign workers in 1983 (Arthur 1991: 74). Since that time, migration in Nigeria has been characterised by emigration, as well as substantial amounts of

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<sup>7</sup> The International Migration Policy Programme (IMP) is an inter-agency initiative for government capacity building and cooperation involving ILO, IOM, UNFPA and UNITAR

<sup>8</sup> See follow-up in IOM and IMP (2001). Report and Conclusions. The international migration policy seminar for West Africa, Dakar, Senegal, International Organisation for Migration, Dakar and International Migration Policy Programme, Geneva.

internal migration. As elsewhere in the region, this has involved considerable rural-urban migration, including both permanent and temporary moves for work, education and to escape drought conditions in the northern Sahel areas in the early 1970s and again in the early 1980s (Meagher 1997: 83). A World Bank report in 1996 suggested that the pace of urbanisation is such that 60 per cent of the population will be urban by 2010 (World Bank 1996). A recent report by an NGO, 'Cities Alliance', suggested that the population of Abuja triples every year, in the fastest process of urbanization in West Africa (Ekpunobi 2003). In contrast, unlike many other countries of the region, there has been relatively little circular migration between rural areas, as Nigeria has a relatively underdeveloped plantation economy.

Aside from rural-urban migration, internal migration in recent years has been increasingly characterised by forced displacement by conflicts over crude oil mining and refining, communal conflicts, and conflicts associated with the democratisation process. One recent study has suggested the number of forced migrants in Nigeria is currently as high as 1.2 million (Ibeanu, 1999, p.168), although none are 'of concern' to UNHCR.

Nigerians are almost certainly the largest single national group amongst Africans living in Europe and North America, although as a proportion of Nigeria's vast population this type of movement is rather less significant than in many of Nigeria's neighbours.

### 3.1 Importance of Migration to the Poor

There are relatively few studies that consider directly the impact of migration on the poor in Nigeria. According to one study, rural-urban migration has led to rural depopulation and loss of agricultural production, as well as strains on urban areas. (Anyanwu 1996: 26). Another notes how economic

#### **Box 3: Migration as a 'Driver of Change'**

An overview of migration as a 'driver of change' in Nigeria has recently been completed for DFID Nigeria. The study's draft report generally paints a negative view of the impact of migration on the poor.

Highlighting rural-urban and forced migration as the key components of current flows, the report notes overcrowding in cities, with negative effects on public health, unemployment, and the threat of violence, as well as rising prices of staple foods as labour shortages rise in rural areas.

Going on to analyse the 'drivers of pro-poor change', the report identifies demographic growth and greater pressure on land, the increased 'manufacture' of ethnicity relating to land claims, deteriorating infrastructure, and discrimination against pastoralists as all stimulating additional migration, with negative consequences.

The paper also recognises the lack of both statistics and recent literature on internal migration in Nigeria, which it describes as 'tailing off' in the 1980s.

*Source:* Blench (2004) – in draft

crisis and structural adjustment has dramatically reduced urban incomes, leading to declining remittances and weakening social ties, but without the urban-rural return migration that has occurred in some other regions of Africa (Meagher 1997: 88). The World Bank's Poverty Assessment for the country suggests that rural poverty is declining, and urban poverty increasing, largely due to rural-urban migration. The report suggests that there is a need 'to design growth policies which focus on (the urban poor), as well as measures to slow down the pace of migration' (World Bank 1996: 106).

However, other studies are more upbeat. A study by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in the south-east of the country found that investment of remittances in assets such as housing, land or livestock has been linked to intention to return, and has helped to fuel a construction boom that has stimulated local economic growth (Tacoli 2002: 22). The migration of Fulani pastoralists to south-western Nigeria is also said by one study to have produced positive economic results, e.g. stimulating the trade in cattle (Adebayo 1997).

One negative feature of migration in Nigeria appears to have been its impact on the status and/or well-being of women. A study of migration in Bendel state in the 1980s found that migrant women had not gained economically from movement to Benin City, but had suffered a loss of status within the household in comparison with non-migrant women (Hollos 1991). There is also growing concern over a more direct attack on women's status and well-being in the form of trafficking of women and young girls to Europe, the Middle East and other parts of Africa.

Nigerian women are believed to be sent into commercial sex work in various European countries as well as Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa, whilst children are sent into domestic labour within Nigeria and in neighbouring countries. One recent press article stated that '10,000 Nigerian prostitutes were said to be in over 300 brothels in Germany, Spain and other parts of Europe and South America.'<sup>9</sup> Children from Togo, Benin, Ghana and Cameroon are also believed to be brought to Nigeria for forced labour (USDOS 2003).

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<sup>9</sup> Article from *Daily Trust* (Abuja), 22 Jan 2002, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200201220075.html>

### 3.2 International Migration and 'Brain Drain'

Nearly 15,000 Nigerians migrated legally to Europe and North America every year from 1995-2001 (Appendix 1), whilst there are estimated to be some 200,000 to 300,000 first and second generation Nigerians living in the US<sup>10</sup>, including perhaps as many as 21,000 Nigerian doctors.<sup>11</sup> A recent study based on 2000 census figures showed that of 109,000 Nigerian-born immigrants in the US aged 25 or over, some 90,000 were tertiary educated (Adams 2003). In Europe, it is estimated that there are some 45,000 Nigerians in the UK, 17,000 in Italy, and 15,000 in Germany (IOM 2003: 219), and although these migrants may be less well educated than those in the US, it remains likely that their level of education overall is high. There is also significant movement to the Middle East, associated with the movement of pilgrims to Mecca (Blench 2004: 7).

The exodus of Nigerian academics and students is said both to reflect and to have reinforced a decline in standards of university education in Nigeria (Jumare 1997: 117). High grade requirements and a limited number of places in Nigerian universities is also seen as encouraging attendance at college overseas, especially in the US (Reynolds 2002). As a result, there are now said to be more Nigerian academics in the US than in Nigeria, with many not assuming jobs in relevant fields but working instead as taxi drivers, factory workers, or in other unskilled or low-skilled occupations. However, it is not possible to estimate what proportion of educated Nigerians leave each year, as reliable figures on the number of university graduates are not available. Blench argues that the movement of Nigerians to the developed world is 'highly diverse', and 'certainly not the outflow of skilled labour it is sometimes portrayed as' (Blench 2004: 7).

The international migration of highly skilled and other Nigerians to developed countries is not entirely negative. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago has estimated that Nigerians in the US alone send \$1.3 billion each year, or more than six times the annual flow of US aid to Nigeria. A small sample survey of just over 100 Nigerians in Chicago found average remittances of \$6,000 per year, with 60 per cent of this going to basic household needs, and remittances higher

<sup>10</sup> See [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Urgent\\_Action/apic020303.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Urgent_Action/apic020303.html)

<sup>11</sup> UNCTAD is reported as having calculated that the importation of 21,000 Nigerian doctors to the US over a ten year period saved the US a training bill of US\$3.86 billion. However, there are only 2,500 Nigerian doctors reported as members of the Nigerian Medical Association in the US and Canada, suggesting the IOM and UNCTAD figures *may* be inflated. See IOM, 2003. p.216

where households in Nigeria are poorer, other factors being held constant (Osili 2001). Financial flows can also go in the opposite direction: e.g. there appear to be substantial outflows of Nigerian oil wealth to Nigerians abroad (Blench 2004: 7).

### 3.3 Migration Policies

The Nigerian government has put considerable effort into contacting Nigerian professionals abroad. President Obasanjo has met with Nigerian professionals living abroad to encourage their return, and has set up an 'Office of the Special Assistant to Mr. President on Diaspora Activities' (Chikezie 2001). The Senate has abolished a measure which meant that Nigerians abroad who had become citizens of other countries lost their Nigerian citizenship (Honoré, undated). The Federal government has established a 'Diaspora Trust Fund'<sup>12</sup>, and has also discussed the establishment of a database of Nigerian professionals abroad.<sup>13</sup> This government activity complements an already-existing abundance of civil society initiatives, including numerous Nigerian hometowns and alumni associations, which represent professional interests and channel remittances.<sup>14</sup>

The Nigerian government have put effort into enhanced law enforcement and better protection including a systematic repatriation network for trafficked children, although the United States Department of State argues that Nigeria still does not fully comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking (USDOS 2003). Several ministries sponsor information campaigns on children's rights and child labour; the Nigerian Immigration Service has created a Human Trafficking Unit; a comprehensive anti-trafficking law was passed in March 2003, whilst anti-trafficking police units were created in 11 states considered to be affected by trafficking. A Federal anti-trafficking unit is said to have been particularly active in Edo state, the primary source state for women trafficked to Italy (USDOS 2003).

Despite these initiatives, there appears to be something of a lack of Nigerian government attention to migration. Measures to address rural-urban migration have been tried in the past, although apparently with little success in stemming such population movements. A policy on the dispersal of industries has not substantially changed the location of these industries, whilst minimum wage

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<sup>12</sup> Jan Wimaladharm, DFID Nigeria, personal comment.

<sup>13</sup> Singer, R. (2001). Nigeria calls expatriate sons and daughters home: government hopes a return of natives will bolster democracy and economy, <http://search.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/02/26/fp7s1-csm.shtml>.

<sup>14</sup> A listing of Nigerian associations abroad is provided on Nigeria Info Net, <http://www.nigeriainfonet.com/>

policy and low prices paid to farmers if anything reinforce the tendency for people to leave rural areas (Anyanwu 1996: 27-9). Internal displacement of Nigerians has been largely ignored by state and federal authorities.

Measures to curb rural-urban and other internal migrations remain popular in some quarters within Nigeria. A recent statement by the Presidential Advisor on Agriculture noted that 'Nigeria has the highest migration level in the world ... with nearly 5 per cent per annum. It means that cities like Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt will become impossible to manage in the next 15 to 20 years', leading in turn to increased crime and other social problems (Obgeh 2003). Meanwhile, an opinion piece in the Abuja-based *Daily Trust* in 2002 called for sedentarisation of nomads, both to end clashes between nomads and pastoralists, and to allow better delivery of education and health services.

### 3.4 Key Issues and Policy Gaps

According to Blench, 'a failure to analyse or structure migration is having significant negative social and economic consequences' in Nigeria (2004: 14). What is needed is improved data collection, a rational policy framework, as well as attention to discriminatory policies that have fuelled violence and conflict-induced migration. Certainly the absence of statistics or other robust data on either internal or international migration limits the ability of governments at federal, state or local level to take into account the impact of migration on pro-poor policy.

As noted above, there has also been little public policy orientated to meeting the needs of displaced Nigerians, with the bulk of assistance being provided by philanthropic individuals, families and social networks. In the Niger delta, oil companies have provided some relief assistance; but elsewhere, displaced people are often excluded from economic resources and opportunities as 'non-indigenes' in their place of asylum (Ibeanu 1999: 176).

## 4 GHANA

Like Nigeria, Ghana has a complex migration history, witnessing something of a migration 'turnaround' from being a country of immigration during the colonial era to becoming one of

emigration in the 1970s and 1980s, as economic and political conditions worsened. EUROSTAT estimates that approximately 10 per cent of Ghana's population of 19 million currently lives abroad, principally in Nigeria, the US, Canada, Germany, Italy and the UK, and only recently, with the establishment of an apparently robust multi-party democratic system, and a more dynamic economy, has significant return to Ghana started to become feasible, and immigration from neighbouring countries restarted.

Ghana has also begun to host small numbers of refugees from neighbouring countries, with around 20,000 new arrivals from Liberia during 2002.<sup>15</sup> However, perhaps of most importance to the poor is the very large scale of internal migration within Ghana, estimated at well over 50 per cent of the population according to data compiled from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) (Litchfield and Waddington 2003).

#### 4.1 Importance of Migration to the Poor

Internal migration in Ghana is primarily from north to south, with in-migrants representing over 40 per cent of the population in the Greater Accra, Volta and Western regions. The role of migrant labour in the development of the cocoa and coffee industries in the 1960s and 1970s has been well-documented (Anarfi, Kwankye, et al. 2004) with Eastern, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions receiving internal migration mainly from Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions. There has also been substantial movement to mining areas, and rural-urban migration, especially to the major cities of Accra and Kumasi. The latter flow appears to have slowed, or possibly even reversed in the last decade (Coulombe and Canagarajah 1997).

#### Box 4: Trafficking and Child Fostering

Despite domestic and international concern about trafficking in Ghana, the movement of children cannot be viewed without reference to the practice of child fostering, which is widespread (as in many other countries in the region).

In practice, different authors view child fostering rather differently. One study of women from the South Volta region engaged in low-paid work in Accra found children being sent to relatives in rural areas ostensibly for education, but in practice ending up in highly abusive and exploitative situations. However, another study found that child fostering was practiced by wealthy and poor alike, often leading to positive outcomes for both family and child.

*Source:* Isiugo-Abanihe (1985)

<sup>15</sup> Data from [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch)

A classic study of migration from the Upper East region showed that migration at any particular time takes around half of all working age males, and 15 per cent of working age females to southern Ghana for periods of at least a year (Cleveland 1991). Similarly, the World Bank *Voices of the Poor* report on Ghana argues that young people in urban and rural areas feel they have no choice but to leave home in search of work, since their remittances are likely to make the difference between food security or its absence for their families (Kunfaa 1999). In the Upper East region in particular, infertile soils and lack of local services are seen as contributing to out-migration. A recent PhD study by Mensah-Bonsu suggests that over half of rural outmigration in northeast Ghana is for work reasons, and that this is dominated by movement to other rural areas (Mensah-Bonsu 2003). This study also suggests that migration is a phenomenon mainly involving young people, where permanent migration is often preceded by short-time seasonal migration.

However, it is also worth noting that for Ghana as a whole, as reported in the GLSS, 60 per cent of migrants reported marriage or other family reasons for their migration, with only 25 per cent reporting work reasons. This was partly because the GLSS includes as migrants not just household heads, but members of the family aged over 15 who moved with them, and also return migrants who might be less likely to move for employment reasons. If these two categories were excluded, only 40 per cent of in-migrant household heads were found to have moved for employment, with the majority citing other reasons.

The impacts of migration on the poor, and on poor regions, are the subject of some dispute. Ongoing work funded from the Netherlands suggests that it may be the poorest groups in northern villages who benefit most from remittances, rather than the middle and 'secure' groups (Van der Geest 2002). A fairly optimistic picture is also painted by a recent analysis of GLSS data, which found a 'migration premium' in that migrants had statistically higher living standards than non-migrants, although this premium had declined by a half between surveys in 1991/92 and 1998/99 (Litchfield and Waddington 2003). It is difficult, however, in such analysis, to separate out cause and effect – in other words, it may simply be the less poor who are more able to migrate, rather than migration that makes people less poor.

In contrast, Cleveland's study of the Upper East region found that migration increased dependency ratios (the number of young and elderly dependent on each working age adult) in sending areas,

and that remittances and improvements in land and labour productivity were insufficient to compensate for this increased dependency (Cleveland 1991). Mensah-Bonsu (2003) found migrants sending home only US\$5-15 a year in remittances, making little impact on rural livelihoods. Meanwhile, even if internal remittances do appear to redistribute some wealth from rich to poor regions, this effect may not be sustainable in the face of the recent decline of the cocoa industry.<sup>16</sup>

There has been some forced migration within Ghana: e.g. from 1994-95, around 100,000 people are estimated to have been uprooted in northern Ghana as a result of ethnic conflict over land, of whom 10,000 moved to neighbouring Togo. Although most returned as the conflict subsided, some remain displaced.

Over the last decade, academic and media attention on internal migration of the poor in Ghana has tended to move away from north-south migration in general to more specific issues, such as the link between migration and HIV/AIDS, and an apparently growing number of women and especially child migrants who may be victims of trafficking and/or other exploitative practices. The proliferation of HIV/AIDS is said to be linked to the movement of women from rural to urban areas where they do not earn enough to live, and where they are therefore exposed to prostitution, rape, and/or promiscuity (Anarfi 1993). Having contracted HIV, they are then said to return to their villages where they infect men with whom they come into contact.<sup>17</sup> However, it is also worth noting that a study of Ghanaian women working in Abidjan found that those selling sex – some 75 per cent of the sample – were earning between six and seven times the national minimum wage in Ghana, irrespective of their level of education and skills (Anarfi 1990: 96). Such work was regarded by many women as a successful short-term livelihood strategy.

There is also concern about trafficking, such as of children sold by their parents to fishermen on Lake Volta, or adolescent girls working as porters (*'kayayee'*) at lorry stations and markets in Accra and Kumasi. Examples have also been cited of children being handed over to women by parents on the understanding that they will be sent to school, given training, or taken care of within a household, but instead the children are put into paid work and no money is given to the child or the

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<sup>16</sup> See the work of Andy McKay and Harold Coulombe on poverty trends in Ghana.

<sup>17</sup> 'Migration causes HIV/AIDS in Upper West', Science News on [www.ghana.co.uk](http://www.ghana.co.uk), posted 11 November 2003.

parent (see Box 4). The majority of trafficked children are believed to be from the Northern region, the eastern part of Greater Accra, and from the peripheral and urban slum areas around Accra. Sekondo-Takoradi, the capital of the Western region, is also said to be a major recruiting centre and thoroughfare for internationally trafficked children (ILO/IPEC 2001: 37), with the Ghana Immigration Service estimating that 3,582 women were trafficked between 1998-2000, and IOM returning 535 trafficked women to neighbouring countries in 1999-2000. However, detailed data on child trafficking is not available.

#### 4.2 International Migration and the 'Brain Drain'

Substantial numbers of Ghanaians have left the country since the 1970s to work and/or study in both Europe and North America. As with many West African countries, it is difficult to find accurate statistics, as undocumented migration is thought to make up a fair proportion of total migration. It has been estimated that in 1996, there were 31,000 Ghanaians in the UK<sup>18</sup>, whilst in 2001, over 100,000 Ghanaians were thought to be in each of the US and Canada (Black, Tiemoko, et al. 2003). Ghanaians also appear to be particularly spread around the world, with deportations of Ghanaians occurring from some 58 different countries in 1998 (Van Hear 1998).

Attitudes towards this migration have been somewhat divided, with concern expressed by many observers about the brain drain. Ghana is estimated to have lost around 14,000 teachers between 1975 and 1981 – many of them to Nigeria (Van Hear 1998). The proportion of health workers leaving Ghana has reached quite dramatic proportions in recent years (Table 3), stimulating considerable media attention and calls for measures to stem the flow.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, the media have also focused on the transfer of money to Ghana by its nationals abroad<sup>20</sup>, with inward remittances estimated in one report at \$1.5 billion for January-September 2003 alone.<sup>21</sup> This estimate dwarfs a previous Bank of Ghana estimate of around \$400 million in migrant remittances for 2001, which even then was the equivalent of 20 per cent of Ghana's export

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<sup>18</sup> Data from EUROSTAT

<sup>19</sup> The theme of the brain drain of Ghanaian doctors has been a recurrent one in newspapers such as the *Ghanaian Chronicle* and the *Accra Daily Mail*.

<sup>20</sup> A survey of newspaper coverage of migrants returning to Ghana during the summer has revealed the high levels of investments by these migrants. See Asiedu, A. 2003.

<sup>21</sup> 'Money transfer agencies on the increase', <http://www.myjoyonline.com/frontarts.asp?p=3&a=7340>, posted 02/12/2003.

earnings; both are an order of magnitude higher than the official IMF figure for workers' remittances which stood at \$32 million in 2000 (Black, Tiemoko et al. 2003). Another recent study suggested that professionals outside Ghana each remit between \$1,000 and \$5,000 annually, with a mean of \$2,200 (Nuro 1999). There appears to have been a mushrooming of both formal and informal money transfer outlets to process such transfers.

**Table 3: Proportion of Health Workers Leaving Ghana as Percentage of those Trained that Year**

Profession	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1995-2002
<b>GPs/Medical officers</b>									
Trained	93	104	84	85	113	84	67	72	702
Emigrated	56	68	59	58	68	50	60	68	487
% leaving	60.2%	5.4%	70.2%	68.2%	60.2%	59.5%	89.6%	94.4%	69.4%
<b>Dentists</b>									
Trained	10	13	9	9	12	9	7	8	77
Emigrated	2	3	3	3	4	2	2	2	21
% leaving	20.0%	23.1%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	22.2%	28.6%	25.0%	27.3%
<b>Pharmacists</b>									
Trained	67	65	80	120	120	120	120	120	812
Emigrated	29	27	35	53	49	24	58	77	352
% leaving	43.3%	41.5%	43.8%	44.2%	40.8%	20.0%	48.3%	64.2%	43.3%
<b>Medical laboratory technologists/technicians</b>									
Trained	31	37	38	45	46	46	45	51	339
Emigrated	8	9	4	6	9	16	14	0	66
% leaving	25.8%	24.3%	10.5%	13.3%	19.6%	34.8%	31.1%	0.0%	19.5%
<b>Environmental health specialists</b>									
Trained	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Emigrated	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
% leaving	na	na	0.0%	na	na	na	na	na	100.0%
<b>Environmental health technologists/technicians</b>									
Trained	100	112	108	109	139	145	135	144	992
Emigrated	2	6	6	3	3	0	2	3	25
% leaving	2.0%	5.4%	5.6%	2.8%	2.2%	0.0%	1.5%	2.1%	2.5%
<b>Nurses/midwives</b>									
Trained	975	911	868	814	1073	1037	1124	1074	7876
Emigrated	195	182	174	161	215	207	205	214	1553
% leaving	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	19.8%	20.0%	20.0%	18.2%	19.9%	19.7%
<b>Total</b>									
Trained	1276	1242	1188	1182	1503	1441	1498	1469	10799
Emigrated	292	295	281	284	349	299	341	364	2505
% leaving	22.9%	23.8%	23.7%	24.0%	23.2%	20.7%	22.8%	24.8%	23.2%

Source: ISSER (2003) State of the Ghana Economy

## Migration Policies

Migration policies in Ghana are currently focused on limiting the departure of skilled migrants, and encouraging those abroad to return. Dual citizenship has been extended to Ghanaians living abroad as an encouragement for them to return freely. The National Patriotic Party has made a conscious effort to strengthen relations with diaspora communities and associations (Henry and Mohan undated). A Non-Resident Ghanaians Secretariat (NRGS) was established in May 2003 to link with Ghanaians abroad and encourage return<sup>22</sup>, and a Homecoming Summit was organised by the government in 2001.

On brain drain in the health sector, President Kufour has pledged the government's determination to offer resources and support to the Council of Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons in their effort to stop the brain drain.<sup>23</sup> Measures have been taken to address the issue through improved working conditions in the health sector, including the provision of cars to health sector workers, although there have been complaints that these have gone exclusively to doctors rather than nurses, leading to resentment and an apparent increased desire to emigrate amongst nurses (Buchan and Dovlo, 2003).

### Box 5: International Migration and Development in Ghana

A recent special issue of the journal *Population, Place and Space* devoted to migration and return in West Africa includes three articles that focus on the impact of migration, return and remittances on Ghana, two of which were based on a recent DFID-funded survey of return to the country.

One shows how, amongst less-skilled returnees to both Ghana and neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire, families have a significant impact on migration patterns, with those whose migration formed part of a family strategy being two and a half times more likely to return with savings over \$10,000.

Elite returnees to the two countries were found to have brought with them a number of concrete innovative practices and productive investments.

A third contribution, focused on Ghana alone, shows how remittances from Netherlands-based emigrants have also had a significant impact on families and community development back home, although this impact varies and can be highly insecure.

*Source: Population, Space and Place* 10(2) 2004.

There is also recognition in Ghana that the exodus of health personnel reflects a lack of opportunities for professional development inside Ghana. In response, the Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS), an NGO, is seeking to provide continuous medical education through newsletters, CD-Roms and the internet. The Ministry of Health is discussing

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.ghanaiian-chronicle.com/230501.page2m.htm>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.myjoyonline.com/frontarts.asp?p=3&a=7649>

with the World Bank and Howard University ways of implementing the use of 'tele-medicine' in Ghana.<sup>24</sup>

Ghana is a signatory to both the refugee and migrant worker conventions, but has not ratified the 2000 protocols on trafficking and smuggling. In 1998, the Ghanaian Parliament approved a comprehensive Children's Act, which prohibits work by children under 15, whilst it adopted the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in 2000. IOM launched a programme in 2001 for the return and reintegration of children trafficked to Central and Volta regions, which includes measures to offer business advice and loans for small enterprises to parents who sold their children to fishing communities on Lake Volta.

There is also considerable NGO activity on child trafficking to and within Ghana. World Vision International works to reduce rural-urban migration and prevent young people from 'drifting' to the cities, whilst Catholic Action for Street Children works to improve the lives of street children and promote their rights through child sponsorship. Other agencies have launched initiatives to return children to their home villages in northern Ghana, although the children themselves have not always welcomed these measures.

### 4.3 Key Issues and Policy Gaps

Ghana does appear to have begun to grapple with some of the impacts of migration on development and poverty reduction, with policy development focusing at present on stemming the brain drain (especially in the health sector), reaching out to Ghanaians abroad, and addressing the problem of child trafficking. As Ghana's economy improves, it is likely that the country will need to deal increasingly with issues of immigration and the return of its nationals, rather than addressing the loss of Ghanaians overseas.

However, as with Nigeria, perhaps the key policy gap is not so much international migration as addressing patterns of internal migration and their impact on poverty. In Ghana, these patterns are especially complex, as rural-rural migration and movements from towns back to rural areas

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<sup>24</sup> Lack of continuous education is cause of brain drain - Chief Medical Officer. [Accra Mail](http://www.accra-mail.com/story.asp?ID=8386). Accra: <http://www.accra-mail.com/story.asp?ID=8386>.

continue to feature strongly in contemporary movements, even if regions of destination may be changing. The government's anti-poverty plans, as set out in the PRSP, do not as yet take this migration into account.

A particularly poorly understood area is that of the migration of children, whose movement is often characterised as forced, but in which the reality may again be somewhat more complex. The area of child migration within Ghana, as well as from neighbouring Burkina Faso, represents a key area of research development for the Sussex-based Migration DRC.

## 5 SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA

Like Nigeria and Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia have also historically been countries of immigration, but now have substantial numbers of nationals living abroad as a result of economic and political collapse. Yet, to a much greater degree than in most neighbouring countries, the key migration issues relate to forced migration. Over the last decade, Sierra Leone and Liberia have experienced a huge amount of displacement of their populations. The 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone is estimated to have caused the displacement of between one and three million people.<sup>25</sup> Although internal displacement is now officially at an end, many certainly remain in host areas. In Liberia, conflict from 1989-96 displaced as much as two thirds of the population (Black and Brusset 2000), and numbers of IDPs at the present time are estimated to be around 140,000.<sup>26</sup>

Displaced people in the two countries come in at least three distinct categories. First, up to a quarter of a million officially registered IDPs in Sierra Leone have been returned to their places of origin since the end of the war under the auspices of the government's Resettlement Strategy. Although benefiting from a settlement package, which included a two-month food ration, household utensils, plastic sheeting, and in some cases transportation, conditions in home areas often remain difficult, and the process has been criticised in some quarters for not being entirely voluntary.<sup>27</sup> A

<sup>25</sup> A report by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children puts the figure at 1 million; the Global IDP database suggests the figure was 2 million; whilst the IMF and IDA HIPC Decision Point document puts the figure at 3 million. See Benjamin 2001.

<sup>26</sup> 'NRC Update: Internal displacement in Liberia: new profile summary', <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/feb41f19f788563785256aa00056edff?OpenDocument>

<sup>27</sup> Global IDP database, reporting comments of MSF and Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children.

similar process, and similar criticisms about the degree of voluntariness of resettlement, apply in Liberia.

Second, clearly there is a large discrepancy between the number of IDPs that have returned to Sierra Leone, and estimates of the total number of IDPs at the height of the conflict. In part, this is accounted for by 'spontaneous' return, without assistance, but there are also many who were displaced, but were never officially registered with the authorities, or were de-registered, and have not since been resettled. This group can be seen as representing a quasi-permanent rural-urban migration flow of some magnitude.

Third, there has also been international movement of refugees. There were over half a million Sierra Leoneans in neighbouring countries, especially Guinea, at the height of the war in the mid-1990s, and an estimated at 135,000 now, with on-going returns from the two main destinations, Guinea and Liberia.<sup>28</sup> There remain over 270,000 Liberians living as refugees mainly in Guinea – to which new flows occurred in 2002 – and Côte d'Ivoire, from which there has been some recent repatriation as a result of the spread of conflict to that country.

Although migration primarily means forced displacement in Sierra Leone and Liberia, it is important not to ignore other types of mobility. In Sierra Leone, there have long been movements from rural areas to towns. Yet post-conflict Sierra Leone is characterised by a resurgence of localised identities, built around village registration as the cornerstone of citizenship and access to basic rights, property and protection (Fanthorpe 1998). As a result, continued mobility within the country may serve to exclude migrants from such rights: e.g. people remaining as 'squatters' in Freetown are likely to be excluded in this way.

### 5.1 Importance of Migration to the Poor

According to the UN's Human Development Index 2003, Sierra Leone continues to be the poorest country in the world. The last household survey conducted in Sierra Leone was in 1989/90, prior to the civil war. At this stage, poverty was already 'endemic and pervasive'. Life expectancy at birth is now estimated to stand at 34.5 years and adult literacy at 36 per cent (UNDP 2003). GDP per

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<sup>28</sup> Data from [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch)

capita in US dollars fell by 35 per cent between 1990 and 2000. Primary school net enrolment fell from 55 per cent in 1990 to 42 per cent in 1999, in part because of the displacement of teachers (IMF and IDA 2002). A total of 57 per cent of Sierra Leone's population fall below the \$1 a day poverty line, although this is lower than a number of neighbouring countries, including Nigeria. Lower levels of income poverty notwithstanding, these indicators highlight the extent of poverty that prevails in Sierra Leone, and point to the role played by conflict and displacement in increasing the incidence, depth and severity of this poverty.<sup>29</sup>

However, internal migration in both Sierra Leone and Liberia certainly pre-dates the most recent conflicts. In Sierra Leone, circular rural-rural migrations have long been directed to the main swamp rice growing areas of Cambia district in the North and Bonthe district in the South, as well as the main cash-cropping districts of the East and the diamond mining areas of the South and East, whilst there was also substantial movement out of rural areas to urban centres of employment (Makannah 1988). There have also historically been substantial movements to the Firestone rubber plantation in Liberia. Although the latter is largely abandoned at present, a recent study of the diamond mining areas in Sierra Leone suggests the migration of perhaps 10,000 seasonal workers may still support 70,000 or more poor people in sending districts (Amco-Robertson Mineral Services Ltd (2002).

A study of the role of internal remittances sent by a sample of 1,500 rural out-migrants in Sierra Leone in 1981-82 found that remittances on average comprised only 12 per cent of the incomes of rural households. Yet this rose to over 40 per cent of the income of the poorest households, with their overall effect being to reduce income inequality in poor areas (Makannah 1988). In turn, although remittances were mainly used in rural areas for consumption, about 16 per cent were used for building or house improvement, whilst 6 per cent were used to set up and/or improve export crop plantations in rural areas (ibid.).

More recent studies on internal migration for work, or on IDPs who have chosen not to return to their home area, are not available for either country. One useful source of information in Sierra

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<sup>29</sup> Complete data is not available for Liberia, but life expectancy stood at 41 years in 2002, and GNI was just \$150 per capita.

Leone may be a new National Household Income and Expenditure Survey, completed in October 2003, although continued insecurity means there is no equivalent for Liberia.

## 5.2 International Migration and the 'Brain Drain'

It is unclear exactly how many Sierra Leoneans and Liberians live abroad, but as noted above, over 20,000 people born in Sierra Leone were counted in the 2000 US census. There are also believed to be considerable numbers of Liberians in the US, many still holding a form of 'temporary protection'. International migration between Liberia and Sierra Leone and western countries has a long history, dating in the Liberian case to that country's colonisation by freed slaves from the Americas. The movement of men from Liberia and Sierra Leone as stevedores and seafarers not only to other West African ports, but also to Britain and Europe, also dates to the nineteenth century (Frost 2002).

Although less studied than Ghanaian and Nigerian associations, there is some evidence that Sierra Leoneans and Liberians abroad have played a role in peace-building and development in their home countries. At the height of the civil war in Liberia, the Liberian Islamic Union for Relief and Development (LIURD), a major NGO that provided assistance to displaced and war-affected populations in the West of Liberia, was established through the efforts of expatriate Liberians living in Philadelphia in the US. More recently, the Coalition of Concerned Liberians (CCL) was established in Washington, DC to represent various Liberian humanitarian groups and lobby for increased US involvement in Liberia.

There are numerous Sierra Leonean organisations in the UK and North America. One example is the 'Sierra Leonean Women's Forum' in the UK, which although primarily orientated to providing advice, information, assistance and social events for Sierra Leonean women in the UK, also raises funds for food and clothing to be sent to Sierra Leone, and to promote awareness of gender and development issues in Sierra Leone.

## 5.3 Migration Policies

The Sierra Leone Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) consists of three central pillars: improved governance, revival of economic growth and extension of social services.

However, whilst it mentions the challenges faced in resettlement displaced people, and highlights policies to supply returnees to farming areas with agricultural seeds, tools and services to improve food security, and to encourage artisanal miners returning to mining areas to form cooperatives, consideration of migration is otherwise largely absent (Republic of Sierra Leone 2001).

A lack of attention to migration is also characteristic of policy elsewhere. One example is a Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Project (CRRP), funded by the World Bank and ADB, and launched in 2000, which seeks to address the short-term needs of ex-combatants, IDPs, returnees, and the communities to which they are returning. The project locates these needs in the context of them remaining in rural areas, and not re-opening previous channels of migration. This is despite heavy investment in road-building that might stimulate renewed mobility.

One exception involves the National Long Term Perspectives Study (NLTPS)-Vision 2025 Programme being developed by the Sierra Leone government with UNDP assistance. This study has created a website to solicit the views of Sierra Leoneans in the diaspora.<sup>30</sup> The Sierra Leone government has also organised a series of 'Homecoming Summits', the latest of which was held in Freetown in December 2003.<sup>31</sup>

In relation to trafficking, the Sierra Leonean government is not seen by the US State Department as fully complying with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, although it considers that the government is making significant efforts to do so. There are no specific laws against trafficking but there are laws against 'procuring a female by threats or coercion for the purpose of prostitution' (USDOS 2003). The Mano River Union countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea) have also formed the Mano River Human Rights Network to address specific human rights issues in each of the countries.<sup>32</sup>

In Liberia, there is as yet no PRSP, and the country and government are currently arguably too unstable for clear policies on migration to have developed, although there are signs already that the new government is interested in promoting the return of exiles from the US.

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<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.uniqueservers.net/vision2025/>

<sup>31</sup> See <http://www.sieraleonehomecoming.com>

<sup>32</sup> See <http://allafrica.com/stories/200402050575.html>

## 5.4 Key Issues and Policy Gaps

As both Liberia and Sierra Leone move towards a more sustainable peace, the key issue relating to migration is clearly the return of refugees and displaced persons, rather than migration for economic reasons. Within Sierra Leone in particular, there have been efforts to build local institutional structures to manage local development, whilst in both countries there has been direct material assistance to returnees.

However, internationally, it is worth noting that the UK is moving ahead with a refugee resettlement programme with funding for one year to move up to 500 Liberian, Ivorian or possibly Sierra Leonean refugees currently registered in Accra to new homes in the UK. Although targeted at 'old case load' refugees, this could be seen as giving mixed signals at a time when the emphasis is on return.

It is also important to bear in mind that in the context of disrupted livelihood opportunities and continued insecurity in rural Liberia and Sierra Leone, the option of diversification of livelihoods through migration is likely to remain an attractive one for many individuals and families. Policies to promote sustainable rural development and peace-building need to avoid 'trapping' families in rural areas, based on a misconception that their full-time presence there is a precondition for peace and development. Rather, increased attention could be paid to the benefits of strong interactions between rural and urban areas.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Most West African countries were net losers of population from 1995-2000. In particular, countries such as Ghana and Nigeria have undergone a 'reverse migration transition', moving from being net immigration to net emigration countries.

Monetary transfers made by migrants in the region are substantial, and have come to constitute a major source of income for many households in the context of economic decline, retrenchment of public services and adverse environmental conditions. Migrants also represent an important source of energy, ideas and improved agricultural management techniques in many rural areas.

Both internal and international flows in West Africa appear to have diversified in recent years, with more regions and countries producing migrants, and these migrants moving to a range of new destinations. Movement to Europe and North America is higher than in other parts of the continent, and is dominated by young men and women.

A sizeable amount of West African migration is orientated to the UK, with significant groups from Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone, and other countries in the region. These groups are also often organised into hometown, ethnic, alumni and other organisations.

Technically, there is freedom of movement within the ECOWAS zone, but migrant workers' rights are not always respected. The Dakar Declaration, a regional process initiated by IOM in 2000 and signed by most West African countries, serves as a plan of action to promote the protection of migrants and to strengthen their role in development. There is also an ECOWAS initiative to introduce regional passports, although regional action to address conflict and mass displacement may be a more urgent priority.

There is emerging concern, but also controversy over the level of trafficking in the region, including that of children. There is also continuing concern about forced migration both regionally and internally, although conflict resolution efforts in Sierra Leone and Liberia have already produced some substantial return movements.

Unlike much of sub-Saharan Africa, PRSPs in some West African countries do acknowledge the importance of migration for poor people's livelihoods – notably those in Cape Verde, Mali and Niger. Support to a regional research and policy network focused on migration and development issues could assist in building regional capacity in the field. Considerable opportunities for cross-country learning exist between francophone and Anglophone countries.

**APPENDIX: HISTORICAL OVERVIEWS OF MIGRATION IN GHANA**

<u>1300s:</u>	The earliest traces of major interaction between West and North Africa noted on the trans-Saharan caravan routes. Hausas from Nigeria have also been noted for their involvement in this activity.
<u>1400 onwards:</u>	The presence of Europeans disrupted north-south movements of people and goods, changing them through slave trade and colonisation.
<u>Mid 1800s:</u>	A number of Akwapem farmers migrated to empty lands to grow oil palm and subsistence crops.
<u>Colonial era:</u>	Many migrants drawn to gold mines and cocoa farms, and individuals escaping the French colonial government's policy of forced labour, oppressive direct taxation and corporal punishment Some movement of professionals and students to UK and other English speaking countries.
<u>1920s-30s:</u>	An estimated 287,000 people from the Upper Volta region migrated to Ghana due to tribal uprising, military recruitment, forced labour and famine.
<u>1940s:</u>	Maliens also emigrated to Ghana following the expansion of cocoa cultivation.
<u>1965 onwards:</u>	Severe economic crisis renders Ghana unattractive to both foreigners and citizens. The proportion of foreigners in Ghana fell from 12.3 per cent in 1960 to 6.6 per cent in 1970. This was also a result of the Aliens Compliance Order of 1970, which led to the expulsion of non-Ghanaians who did not have valid documents.
<u>1970s:</u>	Many Ghanaians emigrate to find work and/or education and training, especially teachers, lawyers and administrators. Movement to countries such as Uganda, Botswana, Nigeria and Zambia to assist with national development. Seasonal foreign labourers who had previously been working in the cocoa industry move to Côte d'Ivoire and Togo as the cocoa industry declined in Ghana.
<u>1980s:</u>	Large-scale emigration as unskilled and semi-skilled Ghanaians move to neighbouring West African countries. Migration a basic survival strategy at a time when individuals and families were unable to cope with the severe economic downturn. An unofficial figure put the average number of Ghanaians migrating to Nigeria at about 300 per day. By 1986, the number of Ghanaians in the Côte d'Ivoire was estimated to be between 500,000 and 800,000.
<u>1983:</u>	Mass expulsions from Nigeria meant that between 900,000 and 1.2 million Ghanaians were deported. This excludes the professionals and their families who were not affected by this exercise.
<u>1990s:</u>	Diasporisation of Ghanaians continued so that large numbers of Ghanaians have been found in major cities across the world, including London, Amsterdam, Hamburg and New York. The UK Home Office recorded Ghana in its list of top ten sending countries in 1996 and it is estimated that approximately 21,485 Ghanaians entered the UK in this decade. The US has also become increasingly dominant as a destination for Ghanaians with approximately 49,703 Ghanaians emigrating to the US from 1986 to 2001

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