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## Migration and Development Research Scoping Study

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# **Migration and Development Research Scoping Study**

**November 2008  
NSCE International  
Thomas Lacroix**

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MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH SCOPING STUDY

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## ***Executive summary***

This consultancy assesses current migration research to determine the key factors which need to be considered in order to better understand the drivers of migration for poor people, as well as the social and economic costs and benefits of migration. The purpose of the consultancy is to carry out a scoping exercise that will inform the design of a new research programme on migration to be funded under the DFID Research Strategy.

Empirical work has highlighted the development potential of migration, but has also emphasised the fundamental heterogeneity of the ways in which migration affects development in migrant sending localities, regions and countries. While the effects of migration and remittances on development indicators such as poverty, health, inequality, income growth, investment and general wellbeing are often positive, this is not automatically the case. Under unfavourable political and economic conditions, South-North and South-South migration can have adverse consequences and can even undermine the development potential of migrant sending countries. The challenge for migration policy and more general development policy is to shape conditions which will minimize the negative effects and maximise the benefits of migration for both sending and receiving countries as well as the migrants and their families themselves. Research has an important role to play in meeting this challenge, by providing the information and analysis crucial to evidence-based policy-making.

This Scoping Study highlights the main gaps and deficiencies in existing knowledge on migration and development linkages. Due to the widespread research and policy focus on remittances and economic impacts of South-North migration, the socio-cultural and political impacts of migration on sending societies as well as the crucial role of South-South and internal migration in development and poverty reduction have often been neglected. Besides the need to address several data gaps, there is also a need to reconceptualise migration as an integral part of general development processes in order to develop a more realistic understanding of the complex migration-development linkages.

This report identifies significant gaps in our current knowledge and associated research tasks, which may help to fill those gaps, in four overarching areas:

- The drivers of migration: it is important to identify the economic, environmental, political, social and cultural forces which shape migratory dynamics in order to outline possible future migration trends.
- Linkages between migration and development: the fundamental question is not whether migration leads to development or not, but which factors explain why migration has more positive development outcomes in some countries and communities, and more negative outcomes in others. There is a need to go beyond local empirical studies in order to achieve more comprehensive insights on the interactions between migration and development.
- Linkages between migration policies and migration/development dynamics: the research has highlighted the need for research on the impacts of general development strategies, governance and conflict on migration.
- Data collection: significant improvement could be made by promoting the introduction of appropriate questions in censuses. Centralising and coordinating other existing or ongoing surveys conducted by public organisations, universities or NGOs at the local or regional level are also ways of improving collection and access to data.

The main gaps identified in this study provide a basis for the research programme suggested in the Programme Concept Note.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is now growing recognition that migration, both internal and international, can represent an important route out of poverty. Evidence suggests that migration can have significant positive impacts on livelihoods and well-being, though it also carries costs and risks that may be borne disproportionately by the poor, and may increase inequality if the risks are not well managed. Migration is now seen as an inevitable global phenomenon that needs to be better understood and managed.

Based on an extensive consultation process, the DFID Research Strategy identified important areas for research on migration. DFID supported the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization, and Poverty (University of Sussex). This five year programme, which is due to end in May 2009, explored ways to *promote new policy approaches to help to maximize the potential benefits of migration for poor people, whilst minimizing its risks and costs.*

This report reviews current research on migration to determine what additional work is necessary in order to better understand the drivers of migration for poor people, and the social and economic costs and benefits of migration. The purpose of the consultancy is to carry out a scoping exercise that will inform the design of a new research programme on migration to be funded under the DFID Research Strategy.

This scoping study aims to identify the state of play and the main gaps in our current knowledge about the interactions between migration and development. The report is complemented by a Programme Concept Note which more specifically assesses the work which has been carried out by the DRC<sup>1</sup> and articulates the demand for new research as well as setting out programme design issues for new work on migration. This will help inform a future bidding process.

This study is, firstly, based on analysis of recent studies and papers commissioned by research centres and development agencies. It also considers the work of international organisations such as the World Bank, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and the EU. The analysis uses literature on migration to draw out what is already known in the field.

In a second stage, extensive consultation was carried out with representatives of the existing DRC on migration, relevant DFID teams, as well as other partners (see list of interviewees in the Annex). Interviews aimed at identifying the views of stakeholders on needs for additional research in order to improve migrant and development policies.

This work summarises the most important research gaps mentioned by the interviewees, and also highlighted in relevant research literature. The report also includes a list of key contacts in DFID, international organisations and academic research centres which have expertise in migration and development studies.

The scoping study is divided into two main parts. The first (sections 2 to 4) reviews the current state-of-the-art of insights into migration-development interactions. This pertains not only to the various ways in which migration impacts upon development, but also to the ways in which development and other factors such as climate change affect migration. Subsequently, the study will review policy options and priorities to enhance the development impact of migration. This includes policies to facilitate remittances and legal and circular migration, as well as policies to mitigate the brain drain and involve migrant diasporas in development. The second part (section 5), drawing on the literature review and the consultations carried out among DFID staff and other stakeholders, identifies the main knowledge gaps on migration and development. Addressing these is vital to help develop more effective policies to enhance the positive development impacts of migration.

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<sup>1</sup> The PCN gives an overview of the current Migration DRC, its objectives and achievements.

## **2. IMPACTS OF MIGRATION ON DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1. Remittances: flows and channels**

Migrant remittances constitute the most direct and visible impact of migration, and have therefore received most attention by scholars and policy makers over the past decade. This surge in interest has been driven by a parallel surge in migrant remittances. The total registered amount of money remitted by migrants to developing countries increased from 96 billion US\$ in 2001 to 251 billion US\$ in 2007 (World-Bank 2007).

The recent growth in registered remittances should not only be attributed to a real increase in remittances, but is also the result of improved monitoring and registration by banks and governments. There has been a proliferation of institutions facilitating remittance transfers even to the remotest areas in the developing world. These include money transfer agencies such as Western Union and Money Gram as well as informal money transfer agencies such as the *hawala* or *hundi* systems. Official remittance statistics do not include the huge amounts of remittances flowing back to developing countries through informal channels. According to a recent World Bank study, informal transfers are *at least* half as much as registered remittances (World-Bank 2007). It has been estimated that between US\$100 and 300 billion are transferred informally each year (Buencamino & Gorbunov 2002).

One third of all the remittances are sent to Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by South Asia (20 percent), while sub-Saharan Africa only receives only 5 percent of all transfers to developing countries (Manuel Orozco, quoted by Nyberg-Sorensen 2004). Most remittances flow to middle income countries because most South-North migrants originate from these countries. Although middle-income countries receive most remittances, in relative terms remittances tend to be more important for small and sometimes very poor countries (such as Haiti, Lesotho, Moldova and Tonga), which often receive more than 10 per cent of their GDP in remittances (World Bank 2006:89). In other poor countries, such as Somalia, official remittance figures are not available, but actual flows are likely to be very high relative to GDP (Van Hear et al 2004). Nevertheless, the relative economic importance of remittances expressed as a share of total GDP tends to be higher in low income countries (IFAD 2007). Not all remittances are North-South flows: nearly half the migrants from developing countries live in other developing countries and South-South remittances are estimated at between 10-29 per cent of total remittance flows (Ratha & Shaw 2007).

Beside remittances sent by individuals, some 'collective remittances' are sent by groups such as hometown associations to be used for development projects for the benefit of the community of origin (Goldring 2004; Lacroix 2005). These usually take the form of basic infrastructure and communication projects such as the construction of roads, bridges, potable water systems, drainage, wells, electrification, telephones, and so on. Nonetheless, collective remittances are only a fraction of those sent back individually to families. It has been estimated that Mexican hometown associations raised about \$20 million for development projects in 2005, which was matched with \$60 million from Mexican public funds. This is only a tiny fraction of the 20 billion US\$ remitted to Mexico in 2006 (Orozco & Rouse 2007).

There is now a substantial body of literature and knowledge on remittances, which is probably the best researched dimension of the migration-development nexus. Although additional research is widely seen as desirable, particularly on South-South remittances and informal remittances, stakeholders do not feel that this should be a research priority for DFID, as other institutions such as the World Bank have already specialized on this topic.

## **2.2. Migration, poverty, inequality and growth**

In recent years, the World Bank and various other institutions have carried out extensive surveys on migration and remittances in several developing countries. This has significantly improved the research capacity to assess how migration and remittances affect development in sending communities and countries.

There is increasing evidence that remittances diversify income risks (Sabates-Wheeler et al 2005a) and have the potential to reduce poverty either directly or indirectly. On the basis of an analysis of a data set covering 71 developing countries, Adams and Page (2005) concluded that international migration and remittances significantly reduce the level, depth and severity of poverty in the developing world. Their results suggest that, on average, a 10 per cent increase in per capita international remittances leads to a 3.5 per cent decline in the share of people living on less than US\$1 per person per day. Another study on Latin America shows that extreme poverty (less than US\$1 per day) falls by 35 percent in Mexico and El Salvador and moderate poverty (US\$2 per day) by 15 percent for Mexico and 21 percent in El Salvador (Acosta et al 2007). Other studies in Uganda, Bangladesh, and Ghana reached similar conclusions (World-Bank 2006). Migration can be a pathway to informal social protection. This includes support from friends and employers; access to jobs or housing thanks to relatives; and access to information, routes, practices and contacts which facilitate travel (Gardner & Ahmed 2006).

Remittances can also fuel productive investment and wider economic growth (Agunias 2006b; de Haas 2007b; Woodruff & Zenteno 2007). For instance, investments from Indians abroad were also important for growth in equity and property markets (Chishti 2007). Remittances enable migrants and their families to invest in agriculture and other rural or urban enterprises. However, under unfavourable development conditions and in marginal areas lacking adequate infrastructure and viable investment opportunities, migration and remittances might also enable migrants and their families to abandon their farms and disengage from other economic activities. If this is accompanied by relocation of the entire family and concomitant investments in cities or abroad, migration might contribute to depopulation of rural areas (McCormick & Wahba 2003; Regmi & Tisdell 2002).

There is widespread consensus that most remittances are spent on primary needs (consumption, housing, education and health) (cf. Terry & Steven 2005). While such expenditure is often regarded negatively, 'non-productive' investments on primary needs, not only have direct positive effects on wellbeing, but can also fuel economic growth indirectly through improving human capital and through various multiplier effects (Adelman et al 1988; Durand et al 1993; Massey et al 1993). For instance, an empirical study in Mexico showed that for each dollar remitted, total income increased by between US \$2.69 and 3.17 (Adelman & Taylor 1990; Massey et al 1993).

Remittances help families to invest in health and education. For instance, a study conducted in El Salvador demonstrated that an increase of \$ US 100 in remittances reduced the probability of school drop-out by 50 percent (Terry & Steven 2005). Adams (2006) found that Guatemalan households receiving internal and international remittances spend 45.2 and 58.1 per cent more, respectively, on education than other households. Similarly positive outcomes have been observed for the schooling of children in Pakistan (Mansuri 2007) and the Philippines (Yang 2004). Another survey found that Mexican children living in households with migrants were more likely to complete their schooling, particularly girls (Hanson & Woodruff 2002, cited in; Rapoport & Docquier 2005). Remittances also tend to improve health and reduce child mortality (Kanaiaupuni & Donato 1999; Roberts et al 1999), especially through improved housing conditions (Acosta et al 2007).

There is now a large body of evidence on the impacts of remittances on poverty and economic development. The DFID staff and other interviewed stakeholders tend to share the feeling that we have gained major insights in the remittance – development nexus. Although economic impacts of migration and remittances are seen as crucial, these were not put forward as a research priority because most of the migration and development research has already been focused on this issue and it is also expected to remain the focus of research efforts by other institutions. However, respondents emphasised that most of work has focused on South-North labour migration. Much less is known about the role of internal and South-South remittances and remittances sent by groups such as refugees and child migrants. Internal and South-South remittances are almost certainly larger than South-North remittances, but little is known about their impact on development and poverty reduction.

### **2.3. Socio-cultural impacts of migration**

There has been a one-sided focus on remittances and the economic consequences of migration. Less attention has been paid to the impacts of migration for community structures, gender relations and care arrangements in sending communities and countries (cf. Nyberg-Sorensen 2004). Households and communities have to reorganise and make a living in the absence of the migrants (Kabir et al 2008). Migration also tends to be a main driver of socio-cultural change. ‘Social remittances’ are the ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital that flow from receiving to sending-country communities (Levitt 2001).

The impacts of migration and remittances on social hierarchies and economic inequality in sending societies are rather ambiguous, and primarily depend on who migrates. Generally, if migrants mainly originate from relatively wealthy families and social or ethnic groups, migration is more likely to lead to increased inequality in the community of origin, while the reverse seems likely if migrants are relatively poor (de Haas 2007b; Stark 1988). Moreover, initially negative impacts on inequality can be dampened or even reversed if migration become less selective over time through the migration-facilitating role of migrant network (Jones 1998; Rapoport & Docquier 2005; Stark 1988).

A recent overview of studies conducted in Central America, Eastern Europe, West Africa and South Asia found that the relation between migration and inequality varies both between and within regions, and emphasised the need for defining which kind of migration, and which kind of inequality are being analysed (Black et al 2005). Migration can also have profound consequences for class and ethnic hierarchies. If lower or middle status groups manage to migrate internationally and get access to international remittances, this may fundamentally upset traditional social hierarchies (Massey et al 1993). In this way, new inequalities based on access to migration and remittances can be superimposed upon the traditional forms of socio-ethnic inequalities (De Haas 2006a).

The impact of migration on gender relations in origin countries has received relatively little attention. It is sometimes assumed that migration of men encourages the emancipation of women staying behind. However, the limited empirical evidence suggest that migration of men does not necessarily have a structural impact in changing traditional gender roles, and may actually serve to reproduce them. Empirical research in Turkey (Day & İçduygu 1997) and Albania (King et al 2006) concluded that migration and remittances do not lead to any permanent shift in the patriarchal family structures. However, Gammage (2004) found that migration has enabled Haitian women to change the political landscape of Haiti, thus challenging traditional gender roles. Also for women who migrate, it should not be assumed that they automatically adopt receiving society norms on gender relations, and possible change in gender relations tends to take decades or generations (King et al 2006; Parrado & Flippen 2005; Taylor et al 2006).

Large-scale migration can also have fundamental consequences for community structures and care arrangements, which can be either positive or negative. A study in Albania found that massive internal and international out-migration from rural Albania since 1990 has disrupted traditional social and kinship systems and has made elderly people particularly vulnerable (King & Vullnetari 2006). While migration can disrupt traditional care arrangements for children and the elderly; on the other hand, remittances may enable households to improve their livelihoods and to substitute family carers for paid carers (de Haas 2007b). Results of another study suggest that migration from north African to European countries has contributed to the diffusion and adoption of European marriage patterns and small family norms, and so has played an accelerating role in the demographic transition and, hence, reducing birth rates. In the case of Egyptian migration to conservative Gulf countries, the effect would be the reverse: i.e. the slowing down of the reduction of birth rates (Fargues 2007).

Compared to the substantial literature on economic impacts, the socio-cultural impacts of migration and remittances are relatively under-explored. Several respondents agreed that research should pay more attention to how migration affects household and community structures, care arrangements, gender relations and the overall quality of life.

#### **2.4. Brain drain and brain gain**

South-North migration of the highly skilled is commonly seen as depriving poor countries of the talents and human capital they need to improve governance and spur national development (GCIM 2005, 23-5). However, recent theoretical and empirical work done at the Development Research Centre and by other institutions (such as by the World Bank and the OECD), has questioned the notion of the 'brain drain' as too simplistic, partly because it fails to consider the potentially positive effects of skilled migration ('brain gain').

Impacts of skilled migration vary according to labour market structures, in particular the availability of human resources in the sectors affected by the loss of workforce (Skeldon 2005). In most countries international migration does not tend to take a very high proportion of the best educated (Adams 2003). Migration of highly skilled is only massive in a limited number of, mostly small and poor countries, located in the Caribbean, the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa. Such countries often suffer from expatriation rates over 50 per cent in the health sector (OECD 2007, 176-7).

However, even in such cases, mass migration of the high skilled is often a symptom of general development failure rather than the cause of problems as such (Clemens 2007; Lowell & Findlay 2002). For instance, a recent study concluded that mass emigration of health workers is primarily a symptom of failing health systems and that most elite health workers would not provide basic healthcare to the most needy if they did stay (DRC 2006). Furthermore, under certain circumstances, migration of the highly skilled can be beneficial if it alleviates unemployment pressures or spurs skill transfers and investment in origin countries (Skeldon 2005). Finally, a brain drain can be accompanied by a brain gain because the prospect of moving abroad may stimulate the incentive to study among stay-behinds (Lowell & Findlay 2002; Stark et al 1997; World Bank 2005).

The respondents agreed that research on the 'brain drain' carried out by the DRC and others has yielded valuable insights. Although policies to mitigate the potentially negative consequences of the brain drain are seen as a priority, research on this issue is seen as relatively well-developed. Several other institutions are also involved in research on this issue. However, interviewees contended that high-skilled migration as an underexploited asset for industrial policies in sending countries (i.e. for

market access abroad or technologies transfers) In addition, more insight could be gained on the potentially positive role of high-skilled diaspora in post-conflict situations (see below).

## **2.5. Migration and political change**

Migration also affects social and political life in countries of origin more generally. It has been argued that emigration could diminish pressure for domestic reforms (Kireyev 2006). On the other hand, migrants can play a significant positive role in societal and political debate and civil society in sending countries, through simulating reforms and democratization, and increasing political and bureaucratic transparency, and the emancipation of minority groups (Massey et al 1993; Newland & Erin 2004; Van Hear et al 2004). Diasporas can be a potential force for change in fragile states. On the other hand, migrants can help fuel violent conflicts, for instance by providing support for warring parties (Nyberg-Sorensen et al 2002; Van Hear 2004). Migrants are often from middle-class or elite groups (Guarnizo et al 2003) and, therefore, might not necessarily represent the views of the poor and the oppressed.

As revealed by consultation process, the impact of migration on fragile states remains a major concern for DFID. Several respondents suggested that expatriated elites may play a major role in post conflict reconstruction processes. The examples of Sierra Leone and Uganda show that returning highly-skilled migrants who take up positions in the public service can bring in crucial human capital.

## **3. THE FACTORS DRIVING MIGRATION**

### **3.1. The impact of development on migration**

On the micro-level, neo-classical, push-pull and other related models see migration as the movement of individuals in the pursuit of income or utility maximisation. Such models have increasingly been criticized by the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) (Stark 1978; 1991). NELM conceptualises migration as a strategy by families or households to diversify income and to overcome local market and investment constraints by earning a higher income elsewhere (Massey et al 1993). NELM also emphasises the role of relative, rather than absolute, poverty in encouraging migration (Quinn 2006; Stark & Taylor 1989).

Although macro-level migration theories tend to focus on income and opportunity differentials as the main forces driving international migration, major factors in the international political economy such as warfare, colonialism, conquest, occupation and labour recruitment often play a role in the *initiation* of, particularly international, migration processes (Castles & Miller 2003; Massey et al 1993; Skeldon 1997). Other factors such as demographic structures and environmental conditions are also likely to be significant.

While development and migration are usually seen as substitutes, theoretical and empirical work has shown that development processes can increase migration. Particularly in low income countries, social and economic development may actually lead to more migration because more people will have the resources and the aspirations to migrate. It does not seem a coincidence that the most important origin countries of South-North migrants are typically not the poorest countries. In this context, Martin and Taylor (1996) hypothesised the 'migration hump': constraints-loosening and aspirations-increasing economic development with a parallel demographic transition (Zelinsky 1971) has a J-curve or inverted U-curve effect on migration (Hatton & Williamson 1998; 2002; Massey et al 1993; Olesen 2002). This explains why emigration tends to steeply increase in the initial phases of economic

development and only later gradually decreases, after which countries might transform into net immigration countries (de Haas 2007a). This hypothesised non-linearity of development-migration linkages stands in stark contrast with neoclassical and push-pull models.

A last set of theories aim to explain why, once started, migration processes tend to gain their own momentum. While migration between particular locations may begin for many different reasons, the literature suggest that, once a critical threshold level of migrants have settled, migration tends to stimulate the creation of social and economic structures that make the process self-perpetuating (Castles & Miller 2003; Massey et al 1993). In particular migrant networks (Epstein 2008; Palloni et al 2001) are known to facilitate further migration by decreasing costs and risks of migrating.

The poorest are less likely to be involved in international migration because of the significant costs and risks usually involved in moving abroad, and most poor people therefore seem to migrate internally (Zohry 2005). Nevertheless, it should be stressed that other work seems to contradict these results showing that in certain countries (Egypt), even the poorest do migrate successfully (Sabates-Wheeler et al 2005b). If poor people migrate, they are likely to run serious risks and experience substantial losses (Waddington & Sabates-Wheeler 2003). These and various other unresolved questions show that more research is needed to increase insight in how poverty exactly affects internal, South-South and South-North migration processes. The consultation process also made clear that stakeholders feel a need for more research into this issue and that the poverty-migration connection should be a priority for DFID.

### ***3.2. Climate change, environmental degradation and migration***

Recently, there has been a surge in interest in the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation for migration – hence the emergence of contested concepts such as ‘environmental refugees’. Particular attention has been paid to the possible impact of climate change in the form of global warming upon human displacement. The debate on global warming is characterized by an opposition between alarmists and sceptics. Alarmists contend that global warming is likely to provoke the massive exodus of people from fragile areas (Homer-Dixon & Percival 1996; Myers & Kent 1995). On the other side, sceptics argue that the effects of global warming are slow and therefore give leeway for people to adapt to changing living conditions. They have also underlined people’s resilience, and have stressed that migration is not the only possible way to respond to environmental change (Black 2001; Goldstone 2001; Wood 2001).

Recent empirical studies have emphasised that environment is never the sole factor for migration – except in the case of disasters. A paper by the Development Research Centre on Migration and Poverty (Black et al 2008) distinguishes between slow impacts and dramatic events. The first are unlikely to trigger emigration or, if so, trigger short range rural-urban or rural-rural flows. The second trigger large-scale flows, mainly short range, possibly international, but empirical work shows that most displaced people return to their place of origin if the catastrophe has temporary effects (such as a flooding). Finally, the paper contends that the poorest people who do not have the financial or social resources to move are those who are the most affected by environmental hazards.

This field of research is still fairly new and there is a general lack of empirical studies on which to ground policies. However, recent work indicates that there is no obvious or deterministic link between migration and climate change. In line with the current state of knowledge, respondents did not prioritise the relationship between migration and the environment as a focus for research or policy. Instead, it was suggested that environment is a crucial cross-cutting factor which should be included in studying other issues, such as migration and conflict (such as by the climate change team). Interviews

with the policy and research division underlined that climate change is a factor likely to exacerbate the effects of conflict on human displacement. Likewise, more attention should be paid to the extent migration can increase stress on natural resources in sending and receiving areas.

## **4. HARNESSING MIGRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT: POLICY OPTIONS**

### **4.1. Optimising development impacts of migration**

It is important not to overemphasise the potential impact of targeted policies to enhance the development impact of migration. Under influence of surging remittances and the growing interest in migration and development, states and development actors have been increasingly interested in developing policies to harness the potential of migration for development in developing countries. The extent to which the substantial development potential of migration can be realised fundamentally depends on more general development conditions. Therefore, assertions that remittances can be 'channelled' into productive investment or be 'mobilised' for national development by governments (cf. Bals & Rousseau 1999; Zarate-Hoyos 2004) seem rather naïve as long as general investment conditions remain unfavourable. This also points to the fact that the margin of manoeuvre for *targeted* policies towards improving the impact of migration on development in sending countries is relatively small. The best policies to optimise migration impacts therefore seem *general* development policies improving overall social, economic and political conditions in sending countries. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a number of targeted policies that might harness the development impact of migration.

### **4.2. Facilitating remittances**

The most obvious way to further enhance the development impact of remittances is fostering cheaper, faster and more secure ways to send remittances. Policy measures considered by development agencies, national governments and multilateral financial organisations such as the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank have tended to focus on measures to facilitate and channel remittances into formal channels as well as to enhance their economic impact. This has generally been done through (1) improving data collection on 'remittance corridors' in order to identify lack of competition and technical inefficiencies in the remittance industry; (2) enhancing transparency and competition through creating and enforcing a legal framework for banks and money transfer operators and through publishing remittance costs (cf. [www.sendmoneyhome.org](http://www.sendmoneyhome.org)); (3) improving the financial and economic infrastructure in developing countries to facilitate remittances, improve access to financial services and increasing financial literacy (cf. UN 2005); (4) fiscal and financial policies by sending and receiving states (cf. EIB/FEMIP 2006; Maimbo & Ratha 2005).

An important aim of such initiatives is often to direct them into formal channels. However, it is often ignored informal remittance channels can be considerably cheaper, faster and even more reliable than formal channels (Van Hear et al 2004). Therefore, the only feasible way to ensure that more remittances are sent through formal channels is to improve the banking system rather than to clamp down on the informal system without creating viable alternatives, which would cause considerable hardship to migrants and their families in origin countries (Van Hear et al 2004).

### **4.3. Facilitating legal migration**

Besides facilitating remittances, lowering the costs and risks of migration appears as another way to enable (relatively) poor people to migrate and reap the benefits of migration. This can be achieved through creating more legal channels for migration of the high and also low skilled for which demand exists in receiving countries. Measures designed to restrict migration can have negative impacts since they raise the costs and risks of migration for poor people and lower the benefits by keeping them in the informal low-paid job market (Sabates-Wheeler et al 2007). Ensuring that the rights of migrants are respected and enforced seems paramount to improve the development contribution of migration (cf. Mehta & Gupte 2003). Recognising the rights of migrants makes them less vulnerable to exploitation and will increase their wellbeing and enhance their capacity for upward socio-economic mobility in destination countries. This would also enhance their capacity to remit money as well as the capacity of the families they leave behind to secure and finance care for children and the elderly. In a recent report on the role of migrant women in development, the UN emphasised the importance of the ratification and implementation of all international legal instruments to protect the rights of female labour migrants, refugees and trafficked persons (UN 2005).

Recently, renewed hope has been placed on temporary or circular migration as an optimum strategy to reconcile the need of migrant labour as well as the development of sending countries (Ruhs 2005). However, significant doubts exist about the enforcement of return and whether such programmes will always benefit migrants and origin country development (Agunias 2006a; Castles 2006). Migrants are unlikely to return massively if conditions in origin countries remain unfavourable. Restrictive immigration policies tend to push migrants into permanent settlement while interrupting natural patterns of circular migration. The paradox is that, if migrants have the right to re-immigration after returning, they might have fewer fears of returning, circulating and investing in origin countries.

### **4.4. Brain drain and diaspora engagement policies**

Policies by either sending or receiving states to stop the brain drain have generally failed because they do not alter the structural conditions that cause people to migrate. For instance, in the case of Zimbabwe, Tevera (2005) argued that a coercive approach to the brain drain would only intensify the level of discontent among prospective skilled migrants. High unemployment among the highly skilled is often the result of misguided education policies, and a better approach is to orient education and training towards the true needs of a country (DRC 2006). Although ethical recruitment policies are often advocated to mitigate the brain drain, their effects are likely to be limited. In addition, they are difficult to implement and may exclude certain individuals from opportunities, so that they could be seen as discriminatory on the basis of country of origin (DRC 2006).

A more fruitful approach seems to be to create an attractive social, economic and political environment that will restore trust among migrants in the state, and that would encourage them to remain involved in their origin countries, to return and circulate, and to make social and economic investments. Governments of sending countries are increasingly abandoning the 'brain drain' approach of trying to keep the skilled at home, and are instead embarking upon policies celebrating emigrants as heroic citizens, as they seek to encourage emigrants to direct financial resources homeward, in the form of remittances, taxes and investment. Emigrants themselves have increasingly asserted political claims in origin countries, and some states have extended political and (dual) citizenship rights to their emigrant populations (Barry 2006; Castles & Delgado Wise 2008; Gamlen 2006; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003).

In sending countries, governments and development agencies have recently tried to enhance the development contribution of migrants, notably through supporting migrants to set up small enterprises in countries of origin and facilitating 'brain circulation' through various exchange and (temporary) return programmes (de Haas 2006b). Governments of both receiving and sending countries have recently been experimenting with policies to support home town and other development organisations established by migrants (Lacroix 2005; Orozco 2003). For instance, as part of its Program for the Attention of Mexican Communities Abroad, the Mexican government has implemented two-for-one and three-for-one programmes that match funds for every dollar raised by home town associations for approved public infrastructure projects in Mexico.

#### ***4.5. Assessing the impact of migration and development policies (especially with regard to engaging diasporas)***

It remains very difficult to measure the success of policies which aim to optimise the positive effects of migration on development and poverty reduction. This is not only linked to the relative lack and recent nature of specific 'migration and development' policies, but also to the lack of independent evaluations of such policies. Very few policy impact assessments have been carried out.

There are some studies assessing the impact of remittance policies. A recent IMF study noted that the global share of informal remittances is decreasing, thanks to efforts by governments and financial institutions to diminish the costs and improve the quality of formal channels: the amount of remittances outside official channels amounted to approximately 25 billion US dollars in the early 2000s, against circa 35 billion in the 1980s (Nyberg-Sorensen 2004).

Governments and international organisations such as IOM have regularly emphasised the importance of engaging 'diasporas' as agents for development. Several European departments for development cooperation including DFID have introduced such policies, but it seems very difficult to implement these in practice due to a range of practical problems and big differences in organisational structure, policy priorities and a lack of trust of migrant organisations towards governmental bodies. The latter run the danger of coming across as patronising if they assume that migrant organisations should be taught how to 'do' development (de Haas 2006a).

Some policies aiming to support (return) migrants and migrant organisation have been developed, including French co-development policies (Lacroix 2005), financial support by the Dutch government to migrant organisations involved in development activities, UNDP's Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals programme (TOKTEN) launched in 1977, and IOM's Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) programme launched in 2001. Although independent evaluations do not exist, internal evaluations of IOM's MIDA programme indicate that they are successful only when they are 'owned' by the migrants through full participation in the vision and implementation of the project (de Haas 2006a).

At the same time, the impact of such 'diaspora policies' seems fundamentally limited and it is clear the political and economic stability in countries of origin will strongly influence the level of transnational social and economic engagement by migrants. Most impact assessments have focused, on the one hand, on the number and costs of projects carried out by migrants within the policy frameworks, and, on the other hand, on their success and failure. But little is known about their impact on the broader development of sending areas.

This lack of insight is often noticed by interviewees from the different institutions. IOM respondent underlined that they do not know the actual impact of their own programmes. Several interviewees at DFID have questioned the validity of the idea that circular migration, return or high-skilled migration policies would be a win-win-win strategy benefiting sending and receiving countries as well as the migrants themselves. They highlighted the necessity to ground this approach in empirical evidence. There is a general concern about how not to fall into the pitfalls of past guestworker programmes. There is a need for detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of projects supported by development agencies in building networks and increasing capacities among migrant and diaspora organisations or in sustaining development projects initiated by migrants. Because this is a new policy field, detailed evaluations, which would serve to identify best practices, are not yet available.

## **5. MAIN GAPS IN MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

Both social scientists and policy makers are coming to understand that internal and international migration is an integral part of processes of social change and development. Earlier views that migration from developed countries was generally problematic – a sign of development failure – are being replaced by more nuanced perceptions, at least in the case of international migration. There is increasing recognition that migration can be an important tool for poverty reduction and enhancing sustainable development (DFID 2008: p.33). Over the past decade, a considerable increase in research has generated valuable new insights into the relations between migration and development. However, significant research gaps remain.

This section summarises the most important research gaps mentioned by the interviewees and in the literature. Each sub-section also lists the research tasks that arise from these gaps. However, no attempt is made to prioritise research tasks here. The limited scope of the consultancy does not make it possible to give a sense of stakeholder prioritisation. Interviewees left the impression that gaps are of equal importance and the subjective nature of their comments does not allow measuring their relative importance.

The Programme Concept Note complementing this Scoping Study draws on the identified gaps to define research priorities and overarching research hypothesis for potential future research in the framework of a Global Migration and Development Research Consortium.

### **5.1. Understanding the drivers of migration and their links to broader process of economic and social change**

There is still a lack of a comprehensive analysis of the factors which drive migration and the ways in which these interact. However, awareness is growing that migration is closely linked to the many other factors of transformation that make up processes of societal change and development. It is important to identify the economic, environmental, political, social and cultural forces which shape migratory trends. This requires an understanding of past and current changes that have led to processes of human mobility. This can provide the basis for building a range of scenarios of possible trends in development and mobility over the next 20-50 years. For instance, current demographic change in major migrant sending countries may reduce their emigration potential and may lead to their transformation into immigration countries. Similarly, economic, political and environmental changes may all transform the conditions for mobility. Improved research on migration futures and how this is linked to broader development processes is important for generating the necessary intellectual tools for designing effective migration and development policies.

It is particularly important to develop improved understanding of why and how the poor move, and the development consequences of their mobility. Interviewees stated that if poor people tend to move locally, then research should focus more on short range migration in a poverty reduction perspective.

There is broad consensus that future research should move away from a focus on North-South labour migration issues and that more attention should be paid to South-South and internal rural-rural and rural-urban migration, return migration, irregular migration and migration by children and women.

Research tasks:

- To construct a conceptual model of migration drivers and their interactions, and to test it through empirical research in origin, transit and destination countries.
- To further develop this model of migration by linking it to forecasts on likely broader processes of social, demographic, political, environmental and economic transformation over the next 20-50 years, in order to provide a range of scenarios useful for policy formation.
- To carry out research on the links between migratory flows affecting specific locations and broader processes of economic, social, cultural and political change in these areas.
- To study why the poor move, under what conditions, and how they mobilise the necessary resources.

## **5.2. Understanding the linkages between development and migration**

There is broad consensus that migration is one of the main future challenges for human development (DFID, 2008: p.34). Yet research on migration and development has remained fragmented between researchers studying the causes and consequences of migration and those focusing on effects in sending or receiving countries. This has hampered a more systemic understanding of migration as an integral part of broader development processes. Several respondents questioned the pertinence of analytically separating migration from development, and suggested that learning to see *migration as development* is a more fruitful way of understanding the subject.

The significant empirical and theoretical advances that have been made over recent decades highlight the heterogeneous nature of migration-remittance-development interactions, as well as their contingency on spatial and temporal scales of analysis. Academics interviewed for this Scoping Study felt a strong need to scale-up insights on migration-development interactions in order to provide policy makers with a sounder basis for policy formation.

The fundamental question is not whether migration leads to development or not, but which factors explain why migration has more positive development outcomes in some countries and communities, and more negative outcomes in others. Improved insight into the principles that determine the heterogeneity of the impact of migration on development can be achieved through comparative and systematic empirical research across a range of sending regions and countries.

Most migration and development research has focused on international South-North migration, and nearly all the respondents highlighted a lack of research on the impact of internal and South-South international migration on development and poverty reduction. This is striking, because most migration occurs within or between developing countries. An analysis of African PRSPs shows that (internal) migration is rarely noted as a tool for development and, if it is mentioned, the impacts of migration are

generally seen in a negative way. In urban areas, internal migration is still mainly associated with overcrowding, negative effects on public health and unemployment. In rural areas the emphasis is often on the threat of violence, rising prices of staple foods, labour shortages and disruption of social cohesion (Black et al 2004).

This reflects a *sedentary bias* (Bakewell 2007), in which migration is primarily viewed as a problem rather than an integral part of development. Likewise, development is perceived as a process which should lead to the fixation of populations. However, such views are based on traditional assumptions rather than solid empirical evidence. In line with the literature review, the majority of interviewees (both academic and non-academic) mentioned the links between urbanisation and migration as an important issue for future research.

Research on migration and development is still often characterised by a focus on economic impacts, while migration has profound effects on social and cultural institutions, and on gender relations, and can create considerable tensions in families and communities through separation and the need for new forms of intergenerational care. As underlined by the DFID research strategy, economic processes are a necessary but not sufficient means for tackling poverty. Improved insights on interactions between migration and socio-cultural change are therefore needed (see DFID, 2008, p.22).

#### Research tasks:

- To compare and contrast cases of successful and less-successful development outcomes in which migration has played an important part, in order to understand the conditions and policy-settings which are likely to lead to positive outcomes.
- To carry out research projects that focus on internal and South-South migration and analyse the effects on development and poverty reduction.
- To examine the impacts of internal and international migration on social relations, with special emphasis on gender issues, relations between the generations, care regimes and shifts in community patterns and power structures.

### **5.3. Understanding the linkages between migration policies and other policy areas**

Trade, foreign relations, security, industrial, agricultural and environmental policies affect livelihoods and, in their turn, migration decisions. For example, the fishing agreements between the EU and Africa, which imposed quotas on national fishing industries, are reported to have played a significant role in increasing irregular migration to the Canary Islands from Morocco, Mauritania, and Senegal. Respondents argued for better research on the impacts of general development strategies on migration. For example, what is the impact of improved education and infrastructure in developing countries on internal and international migration? Another example mentioned was the consequences of the entry of China into the World Trade Organisation on Asian migration systems.

Interactions between migration, governance and conflict should also receive more attention. Interviewees put forward different possible approaches to address this interaction. The role of highly-

skilled migrants in the administration of Southern states in post-conflict contexts (for instance in Sierra Leone and Uganda), is a case in point. Diasporas are a frequently overlooked asset in strengthening state administration and public services, another element of the DFID research strategy (DFID, 2008: p.32). The nexus between migration, conflict and environmental change was also frequently mentioned in interviews, as well as in DFID policy documents (see also DFID 2008 p.32). Changes in governance can also affect the impacts of migration on development. For instance, some studies have shown that the decentralisation policies carried out in the framework of Structural Adjustment Plans have reinforced translocal linkages between sending areas and the diaspora, which, in turn, improved the impact of individual and collective remittances (Lacroix 2005).

Analysis of the impacts of migration management policies on development is another important theme. Interviewees cited a broad range of relevant migration policies: entry categories, border control, return policies and temporary migration regimes. Migration restrictions may make South-North migration more selective and less accessible for the relatively poor, potentially decreasing the contribution of migration to poverty reduction. No systematic research has been done into this issue. Such knowledge gaps are particularly large with regard to internal and South-South policies. For example, what is the impact of free movement zones such as ECOWAS in West Africa on the migration-development nexus?

States of sending and receiving countries have developed several policy instruments which aim to enhance the development impact of migration, such as remittance-facilitating policies, circular migration schemes, 'co-development' programmes, home country investment schemes and diaspora engagement policies. Both the literature and the interviews indicate that relatively little is known about the actual effects of such policies. For instance, 'co-development' policies are prominent in European migration and development debates, yet these discourses are difficult to translate into action and it is unclear what the actual effects of such policies on development has been.

One area in which there has been substantial research is remittances, particularly with regard to volume, direction and characteristics of transfers. Thus there seems little need for new macro-level empirical research in this area at present. However, there is a need for systematic evaluation of research findings on remittances, in order to assess distributional effects, effectiveness in reducing poverty and the development impact of migration in specific localities. It may prove necessary to commission some fine-grained local studies in order to better understand the varying local impacts of remittances, and the contextual factors involved in these.

#### Research tasks:

- To study the effects of non-migration policies (for instance on trade, investment, aid, military cooperation and security) on migratory flows, their characteristics and development outcomes.
- To study the effects of policies on governance, peace-building, conflict reduction and humanitarian assistance on migration.
- To study the effects of migration management policies on migration flows, their characteristics and development outcomes. This includes paying special attention to unexpected results (such as the effects of migration restriction on irregular migration and settlement as well as poverty reduction).

- Systematic evaluation of policies to help migration serve development (such as improving remittance transfer systems, diaspora engagement, circular migration and co-development policies).
- Systematic review of existing research and the state of knowledge on the development impacts of remittances. Such research should pay special attention to differing outcomes for specific groups and across differing locations, in order to understand the effects of contextual factors and policy settings. If gaps in knowledge are identified, then further primary research may be needed.

#### **5.4. Improving data**

Quality and access to data need to be further improved. Enormous progress has been made thanks to the work of various institutions and research teams. Examples include the 226\*226 table provided by the Development Research Centre team at Sussex University and UNDP databases. Nevertheless, significant improvement could still be made by promoting the introduction of adequate questions in censuses. Centralising and coordinating other existing or ongoing surveys conducted by public organisations, universities or NGOs at the local or regional level are also ways of improving collection and access to data. One interviewee suggested that appropriate changes in national census questionnaires should be examined well before censuses are carried out. Otherwise another decade may be lost before it is possible to obtain adequate data.

##### Research tasks:

- Research commissioned or supported by DFID should pay special attention to improving data production, availability and access. Research projects should where possible have training and capacity-building components based on full involvement of Southern researchers in design, implementation and analysis.
- Measures to improve data production, access and archiving should be part of wider development efforts, for instance in supporting the development of statistical capacities and instruments in less-developed regions.

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## **ANNEX: CONSULTATIONS**

The scope of the research has been informed by extensive consultation with DFID Staff and external stakeholders, identifying specific gaps in existing research and the demand for new knowledge in particular areas. The people interviewed are listed below:

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