

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT through DECENT WORK

FOR GROWTH, PRODUCTIVE JOBS, INCOME, FOOD SECURITY, GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, RIGHTS, VOICE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CRISIS RESILIENCE



International Labour Office

Themes

Rural Policy Briefs

## Labour Migration Governance for Rural Development

*Migration provides many poor rural households with a livelihood strategy. However, it can also disrupt local employment, undermine family and community cohesion and engender dangerous and exploitative working conditions. The benefits of migration for employment, economic growth and poverty reduction can be achieved and its costs minimized if regulated properly. Deliberate attention is needed to improve migration governance and to mainstream migration considerations in national development strategies.*



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### Facts and Figures

- The estimated number of people living outside their country of origin increased from 155 million in 1990 to 214 million in 2010. About half of these - most of the adults - are economically active.<sup>1</sup>
- Over the last 50 years, 800 million people have migrated from rural to urban areas.<sup>2</sup>
- Lack of decent work combined with widening disparities in incomes and human security are main push factors in rural areas. Degradation of land, decreased agricultural productivity, lack of access to credit and to arable land, and conversion of farmland to capital intensive agricultural export industry contribute to rural out-migration.
- Rural out-migrants typically swell the ranks of the informal economy in urban areas and abroad.
- Today half of all migrants worldwide are female, and women migrant workers are particularly at risk.<sup>3</sup>
- Remittances from family members abroad supplement the incomes of rural households. In some origin countries such as Senegal, migrants' remittances account for up to 70 percent of household earnings.<sup>4</sup>
- Officially recorded remittance flows to developing countries were estimated at USD 325 billion in 2010.<sup>5</sup>

### Why action is needed

#### In countries of origin...

- Migration can alleviate pressures on local labour markets, land, and natural resources, but it may also create labour shortages in rural communities, pushing women and children to replace absent young men, thus lowering household productivity and exacerbating risks of child labour.
- Lack of jobs in rural areas intensifies rural out-migration, which puts pressure on urban labour markets as well as the quality of life in urban areas.
- Environmental degradation and climate change are accelerating the displacement of rural populations who would otherwise prefer to stay in their place of origin. They are often compelled to migrate due to the lack of fundamental needs, such as access to fertile land, adequate infrastructure and basic service support.
- Warfare, mass violations of human rights and major political upheavals also provoke displacement of populations, notably in rural areas.

#### In countries of destination...

- Migration helps offset the consequences of aging populations and declining work forces in destination countries. It also fulfills labour needs in rural areas, including agriculture, mining, infrastructure construction and other activities.
- Unregulated labour migration often means high levels of abuse and exploitation of migrants and leads to unfair



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competition when some employers take advantage of unprotected migrant workers.

- Absence of non-discrimination and integration measures exacerbate social tensions between vulnerable newcomers and established populations.
- Particularly in times of economic crisis, destination countries tend to restrict immigration, despite real demand for migrant workers in certain sectors.
- High unemployment rates among native born workers of destination countries are often blamed on foreign migrant workers thus inciting social conflict.
- In destination countries, migrants meet changing labour and skills needs resulting from technological advances, changes in market conditions, and transformations in industrial processes and work organization.
- Many migrants work in the rural areas of destination countries, often in the three most dangerous sectors: agriculture, mining, and construction, often without Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) protection.
- The very nature of work options available to rural migrants (often temporary, seasonal, or informal) expose these

## Box 1

### Migrant remittances

Remittances are personal earnings that migrant workers living abroad transfer to their country of origin. They reflect the usually modest portion of earnings remaining after migrants cover living and housing costs, employment and personal expenses and, often, reimbursement of loans for recruitment and travel costs. Skills and knowledge acquired in destination countries are also referred to as remittances when migrants bring or transmit them to home countries.

Most financial remittances go directly to migrants' families, who spend them on basic needs, mainly nutrition, housing, education and health care. These expenditures enhance human capital while expanding local demand for goods and services such as construction and schooling.

To enhance remittance contributions to development, migration governance needs to:

- ensure that migrants have decent working conditions and receive their earnings
- ensure inexpensive, safe and reliable international money transfer
- encourage productive use of both financial and knowledge remittances

workers to dangerous, dirty and degrading jobs subject to exploitation and abuse.

- Lack of protection of rights and decent work conditions for migrants, and inadequacy of authorized channels between labour demand and supply result in abuse and exploitation. Foreign workers in Europe, for example, suffer rates of occupational injury and death twice as high as native workers.
- Temporary migrant workers, particularly in agriculture, have little or no access to social security coverage.

### Policy options

#### Making rural areas resilient and employment rich

- Invest in socio-economic infrastructure including schools, roads, and processing and manufacturing facilities to connect rural producers to urban and global markets, thereby making rural livelihoods more economically viable.
- Boost investment in both agriculture and off-farm micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) that provide employment and enhance incomes.
- Develop employment intensive public works programmes that achieve environmental protection through reforestation, erosion prevention and watershed maintenance. Support activities, such as improved irrigation and roads that can create additional jobs, income and skills for rural communities.
- Provide support for small scale and family farms by facilitating access to land, credit, affordable farm equipment and inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides and seeds.
- Encourage and support the development of cooperatives, that can increase productivity and incomes, collectively negotiate better prices for seeds, fertilizers, transport and storage, mobilize capital, pool knowledge, achieve economies of scale, enhance leverage in the marketplace and help integrate value chains.
- Provide an enabling environment and incentives for productive investment of social and financial remittances in rural areas. This includes facilitating transfer of skills and technology, as well as reducing the costs of transferring remittances.

#### Empowering rural youth and women

- Envisage appropriate incentives to encourage youth to become active and involved members in their community. Provide them with a voice and role in local community organizations.
- Provide career guidance for youth, linking it with training and employment prospects in their communities.
- Develop training that enhances human capacity through education, training workshops, career guidance, and entrepreneurship support combined with extension services such as credit.

#### Developing coherent and comprehensive labour migration governance (in origin and destination countries)

- The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration provides a comprehensive agenda of principles and guidelines for governance and national policies.<sup>6</sup>
- Establish a comprehensive national policy and administrative framework whose key elements should include:
  - ◆ Improving data collection and analysis on labour markets, skills, and other factors essential to formulate and implement appropriate labour migration policies.

- Research and analysis on the impact of labour migration on employment creation, generation of capital, social welfare and social security coverage.
- Developing cooperation among governments and employers' and workers' organizations to understand labour market needs, demographic trends and social factors in both origin and destination countries.
- Mainstreaming migration into national development strategies.
- Regulating recruitment practices for migrant workers, namely by licensing and supervising recruitment and placement services and requiring written employment contracts.
- Informing migrants and potential migrants (and their employers) of human and labour rights; employers' respective obligations; and about the migration process (employment opportunities, legal frameworks, conditions of life and work in destination countries, risks of irregular migration such as abuse, exploitation, trafficking, etc.).
- Providing skills training for migrants and potential migrants before departure to enhance their access to decent jobs.
- Providing orientation information to migrant workers upon arrival in destination countries, including information on employment conditions and rights, support services, and access to unions.
- Implementing a legal framework to address discrimination and inequality of treatment in employment.
- Fostering integration among migrants and host populations in destination countries.
- Facilitating the incorporation of migrants into unions, community associations and workers' organizations.
- Ensuring that social protection measures are provided for migratory-related work that is temporary, informal, or seasonal and prone to decent work deficits.

### **Ensuring protection for migrants in rural areas**

- Monitor working and living conditions and strengthen labour inspection for migrant workers in agriculture, particularly those in seasonal or temporary situations.
- Address working conditions and vulnerabilities to abuse and exploitation of low-skilled migrant workers, particularly those in irregular situations and the informal economy.

### **Box 2**

#### **Good governance of labour migration and links with development**

An ILO project in Senegal, Mauritania and Mali (2009-2012) is facilitating orderly migration to Spain to maximize the development benefits of migration. It aims to match labour market supply and demand through temporary migration schemes; enhance migrant workers' employability by supporting vocational training institutions; and improve training in countries of origin. It promotes effective reintegration of migrants into national labour markets upon their return. It also developed, among others, departure guides, a return guide and databases. In rural areas it strengthened the capacity of worker organizations to provide information to potential migrants and their families.

### **Box 3**

#### **Extending social security to migrant workers and their families**

The ILO Project "Strategies for Extending Social Security to Migrant Workers and their Families from and within Africa" (2008-2011) is building institutional capacities and undertaking operations to provide social security coverage to migrants from thirteen African countries.

In a related endeavor, ILO's Micro-Insurance Innovation Facility is working with CERMES, a French Research Institution, to test the feasibility of using remittances from African workers in France to finance health insurance for their families in Senegal, Mali and Comoros.

Source: <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/node/1941>

- Develop means to detect and prevent forced labour, and to identify, support, and protect victims of trafficking.
- Include temporary migrant workers in social security schemes. Arrangements should stipulate that the legislation of the country of origin and of the destination country applies, as concerns:
  - ◆ Payment of employment injury benefits abroad
  - ◆ Health care coverage for the dependents remaining in the country of origin
  - ◆ Accumulation of rights in case of renewal of work permits
  - ◆ Reimbursement of workers' contribution



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effectively. ILO supervision of its Conventions results in concrete technical support to governments to adopt and implement these standards in national legislation and practice.

- The ILO conducts capacity building, technical cooperation and advisory activity on labour migration worldwide. This includes projects in Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on issues of migration, including both from and to rural areas, as well as training courses on labour migration.
- The activities of most ILO technical departments address relevant aspects of migration, from international labour, to skills mobility, to promotion of cooperatives in rural areas for migrants and their communities.

## ILO's role

- ILO brings to bear the full range of normative, employment, labour market, social protection and social dialogue aspects of the world of work, including tripartite participation on migration policy and practice.
- ILO Conventions No. 97 and No. 143 on migration for employment, along with the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, provide essential principles and guidance for the formulation of national laws, regulations and policies to govern labour migration

<sup>1</sup> ILO: *Towards a Rights Based Approach to Labour Migration* (Geneva: 2010)

<sup>2</sup> FAO: T. Sakuyama: *The Roles of Agriculture, Project Brief No. 2* (Rome: 2007)

<sup>3</sup> Council of Europe: *Economic Migration, Social Cohesion and Development: Towards an Integrated Approach* (Strasbourg: 2009)

<sup>4</sup> FAO: *Till to Litter: Linkages between International Remittances and Access to Land*, LSP working paper (Rome: 2004)

<sup>5</sup> World Bank: Ratha, D., Mohapatra, S., & Silwal: *An Outlook for Remittance Flows 2011-2012, Migration and Development Brief* (Washington: 2010)

<sup>6</sup> ILO: *ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration: Non-binding Principles and Guidelines for a Rights Based Approach to Labour Migration*, (Geneva: 2006) Available at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/areas/multilateral.htm>

## Links

- ILO: International Migration Programme: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/>
- ILO: *ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration: Non-binding Principles and Guidelines for a Rights Based Approach to Labour Migration*: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/areas/multilateral.htm>
- ILO: Good Practices Database - Labour Migration Policies and Programmes: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/migmain.home>
- ILO : Anti-discrimination Action Profiles: [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/info/dbase\\_practices.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/info/dbase_practices.htm)
- ILO: Database on International Labour Migration Statistics: [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/info/ilms\\_database.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/info/ilms_database.htm)

## Tools

- ILO: *Preventing Discrimination, Exploitation and Abuse of Women Migrant Workers: An Information Guide* (Geneva: 2003) [http://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Instructionmaterials/lang—en/docName—WCMS\\_116358/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/employment/Whatwedo/Instructionmaterials/lang—en/docName—WCMS_116358/index.htm)

- ◆ OSCE/IOM/ILO: *Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies* (Geneva: 2006) [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/download/osce\\_iom\\_ilohandbook\\_en.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/download/osce_iom_ilohandbook_en.pdf)
- ◆ ILO: *In Search of Decent Work: Migrant Workers' Rights: A Manual for Trade Unionists* (Geneva: 2010) [http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS\\_120113/lang—fr/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_120113/lang—fr/index.htm)

## Other Materials

- ◆ ILO: *International Labour Migration: A Rights-Based Approach* (Geneva: 2010)
- ◆ Awad, I.: *The Global Economic Crisis and Migrant Workers: Impact and Response* (Geneva, ILO: 2009)

## Contact:

International Migrant Programme: [migrant@ilo.org](mailto:migrant@ilo.org)  
Samia Kazi Aoul: [kaziaoul@ilo.org](mailto:kaziaoul@ilo.org)

Authors: Patrick Taran and Samia Kazi-Aoul