



© Anja Seiler/HELVETAS Benin

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

International migration is not a recent phenomenon. It is on the contrary a remarkably stable global pattern involving about 3% of the world's population. The stock of international migrants is estimated at 247 million and constantly increasing. Migration has furthermore never been so diverse in terms of the populations, trajectories and human realities involved. Women are increasingly migrating on their own, and «South-South» migration has also reached unprecedented scale. The understanding of migration and its implications has evolved. Traditionally perceived through a security lens, migration is increasingly recognised as an «enabler for development». In this respect, migrants are «actors» of development and contribute to the growth of receiving countries while playing a crucial role in promoting financial, cultural and knowledge transfers with their countries of origin. They are also «subjects» of development whose resources and rights need to be safeguarded.

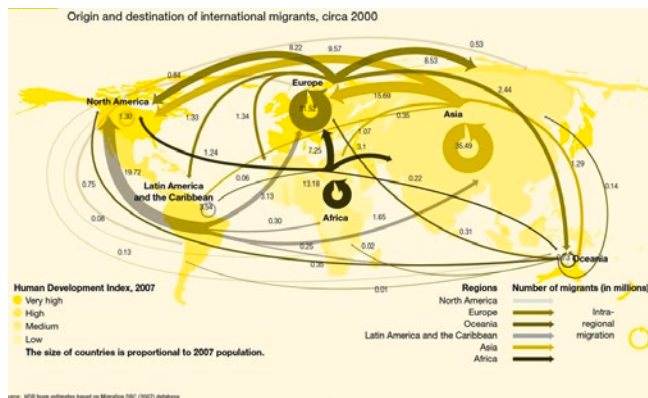
HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation started working on «Migration and Development» (M&D) in 2011 with the ambition of maximising the development impact of migration and for its better integration into programmes and projects.

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Bank, about 247 million people – or around 3% of the world's population – live outside of their country of birth¹. This figure on «mobility» reaches a billion if one adds the estimated 740 million people that are moving within their country². This implies that about one seventh of the world population is «on the move».

While a global phenomenon, migration is also multi-dimensional and dynamic. Migration is the consequence of diverse motivations, opportunities and pressures. Growing intra- or interstate conflicts, climate change and the steady increase of global inequalities are «push factors» that make migration a lasting livelihood strategy. In parallel, sustained demand for workers in growing economies and cheaper travel costs fuel mobility at regional and global levels.

While people also migrate for education, family unification or simply for their security, 90% of migration flows remain work-related³. Another sign of diversity relates to migration trajectories. Although most attention in the North is focused on «South-North» migration, the UN estimates show that only 37% of migrants move from «developing countries» to «developed countries». The vast majority moves either between developed countries or between developing countries. According to estimates, more than half of migrants move regionally⁴.



Most movements occur at regional level

Migration also varies in time and length. It can be seasonal, spread to several years before return, or be permanent. The «feminisation» of migration with about 50% of women migrating on their own is further evidence of new and changing dynamics⁵.

MIGRATION AS AN ENABLER OF

DEVELOPMENT

Migration and development are often seen as separate portfolios, but the potential of migration to serve as a means of development is increasingly recognised. Labour migration, the largest flow, has the potential to

act as an engine of growth and development for all the parties involved, if well managed:

- At an individual level, migrants access additional work and employment opportunities. This allows for improved livelihoods, increased revenues and the acquisition of new skills.
- The economies of destination countries benefit from the much-needed workforce and skills.
- Countries of origin in turn benefit from the various capitals acquired by the migrants, including financial remittances, and transfers of information, skills and values.

Minimum framework conditions are necessary for such a «win-win-win» situation to be achieved. But the potentials of migration are not being fully realised at present, and the situation of migrants varies enormously worldwide. Migrants and their families are still vulnerable and exposed to numerous risks and abuses including poor working conditions, low wages and the denial of basic human and workers' rights.

The benefits of migration depend on the degree to which migrants are protected and empowered by their home countries and the countries of destination.

FOCUSES AND APPROACHES

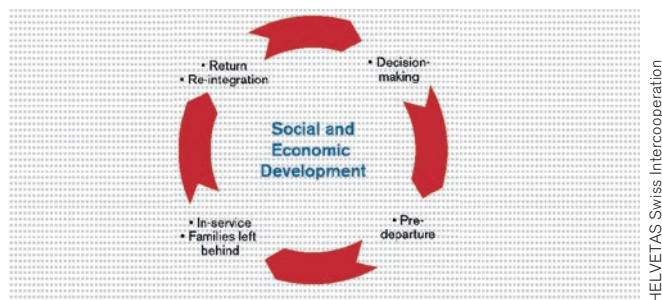
Helvetas included «Migration and Development» into its portfolio in 2011 as part of the working area «Governance and Peace». Given the multidimensional nature of migration, Helvetas' engagement with M&D is also linked to other core competences such as skills development and social and economic development.

Helvetas' mandate is to support impoverished and disadvantaged peoples and communities who want to actively improve their living conditions. It supports the link between migration and development, recognising migration as a viable livelihood option.

Considering the importance of mobility within and between developing countries, the little attention the topic receives, and its geographic presence, Helvetas focuses its intervention on «South-South» migration.

Helvetas' objectives are to contribute to the protection of the rights of migrants, minimise risks and costs, and maximise migration's impact on local social and economic development.

Following a migrant-centred approach, the goal is to support migrants and their families in terms of access to information, rights and capacities throughout the whole migration cycle. In order to be fully effective, support should therefore ideally be spread to both countries of origins and destination.



The migration cycle

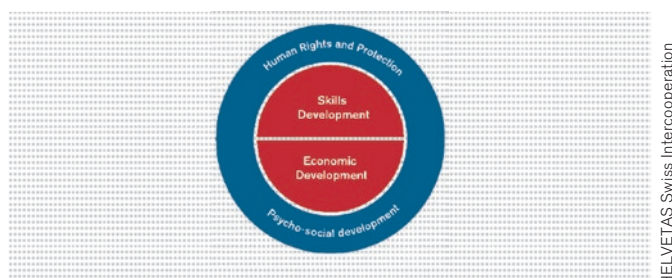
INTERVENTION AREAS

Migration has implications on many sectors of development work and therefore requires a multi-disciplinary approach. A migrant-centred approach strengthens the human and social dimension without neglecting the economic perspective of the countries of origin and destination.

Human rights and protection: Good governance and ensuring human rights along the migration cycle set the framework for a migrant-centred management and will lead to enhanced protection.

A human-rights-based approach to global and local migration governance is needed to protect the rights of all migrants and their families. This implies advocating a legal and policy framework that protects the human rights of migrants and recognises their specific vulnerabilities. It also implies support for public authorities and the private sector in both countries of origin and destination so that they can comply with their obligations.

In parallel, migrants themselves need to be empowered to know, claim and access their rights in their home country and abroad.



Intervention areas of HELVETAS in the field of M&D

Maximising economic returns and their development impact: Employment opportunities and higher incomes are among the main drivers of migration, and remittances are one of the most tangible benefits of migration to developing countries.

Many households depend on these transfers of money and additional income for immediate consumption needs. In the absence of longer-term planning, however, they often remain vulnerable. The productive use of remittances, including their longer-term orientation, is a

challenge for many migrants and their families, as they lack the necessary financial knowledge and skills.

Because the decision on how to use remittances is the sole responsibility of the family, the focus should be on informing families about financial tools and options. Financial literacy means empowering families to plan financial aspects and set goals for a successful migration, but also to deal with very practical issues of «how to remit».

At the same time, the positive contribution of the diaspora to the development of their country of origin should also be recognised. The policies or framework conditions that are necessary to support their involvement and investments are possible additional issues to explore.

Skills for migration and skills from migration: The majority of labour migration involves low-skilled or semi-skilled workers. Women and men often leave their homes to work in childcare, domestic work, construction or cleaning. In many cases these workers have limited experience in the economic sector they are about to work in and are not familiar with the countries to which they are heading. Such a lack of knowledge and qualifications renders the migrants vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.



Vocational skills training in Nepal

Experience shows that it is worth investing in skilling aspirant migrants and that even basic skills lead to higher self-confidence, less abuse and higher incomes. It is therefore important to support pre-departure training courses that combine vocational skills training with more general information about issues such as working conditions, language and/or culture of the countries of destination.

It is also important to anticipate and support models that will favour the recognition of skills that migrants have acquired when they return home. These skills and knowledge could in turn play a positive role in the local economic development of the countries of origin.

Psycho-social development: Migration often entails different degrees of vulnerability and risk of abuse for women and men. Women are particularly at threat. Domestic work is illustrative, as it is often not covered by

labour laws and takes place within the private sphere of a household.

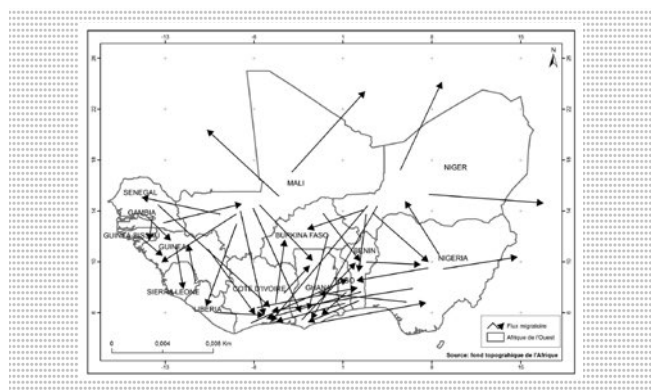
Any exploitation – economic, physical or sexual – leaves deep psychological scars. Migration also leads to cultural changes. The absence of family members may alter gender roles and family structures; children may be particularly affected.

The risks and possible social costs of migration need to be properly analyzed in order to prepare and assist migrants and their families to cope with the new situation created by departure, and to develop mechanisms to support migrants and families in distress.

PROJECTS AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Helvetas developed its approaches to migration and development through two projects in the areas of safe labour migration management in Sri Lanka and Nepal (both are supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation). For each project, a 2-year pilot phase clarified approaches for the on-going implementation phase (3-4 years). Within these projects, Helvetas has gained substantial experiences in the areas of safe migration, labour migration management, and greater institutional and technical knowledge (see box).

Helvetas is further integrating M&D into other programmes and regions. A pilot project has been launched in Benin in West Africa. The activities focus on awareness-raising and information on migration and the possible role of local governments, and on supporting local civil society and migrants' associations.



Principal migration routes in West Africa

- (1) World Bank, Migration and Development Brief Nr. 24, April 2015, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1288990760745/Migration-and-DevelopmentBrief24.pdf>
- (2) United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2009
- (3) According to the International Labour Organization, see for instance: Labour Migration: Facts and Figures 2014: http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/media-centre/issue-briefs/WCMS_239651/lang-en/index.htm
- (4) For these estimates, see for instance: Human Development Report 2009
- (5) See for instance: Labour Migration: Facts and Figures 2014

These concrete projects are complemented by an engagement in international policy dialogue. For instance, HELVETAS actively participated in the preparatory consultations with the Swiss government and Swiss civil society for the 2013 High Level Dialogue on M&D and the annual Global Forums on M&D (GFMD). It is a signatory to the 2014 civil society «Stockholm Agenda», which supports the inclusion of goals and targets on migration in the post-2015 development agenda.

Improving the protection and well-being of labour migrants and their families: Project Approaches in Nepal and Sri Lanka

Both Nepal and Sri Lanka are part of the same migration corridor and face some similar challenges. With the aim of increasing the benefits of migration, the two projects work with local institutions and civil society actors to directly target potential, in-service and returnee migrants and their families according to the following intervention priorities:

- **Informed decision-making, awareness and learning:** Provide safe migration messages, including rights, correct processes and psycho-social issues in order to ensure an informed decision-making process
- **Skills development and remittances management:** Support migrants with skills development prior to departure, leading to higher salaries. At the same time, migrants and their families are empowered to use the remittances effectively and sustainably



Provision of legal support to migrants in Sri Lanka

- **Access to justice and victims' support:** Provide legal aid and psycho-social support to migrants and their families in difficulties
- **Advocacy for policy change and implementation:** Use field experience to support and influence national policies for better protection of migrants