



## Migration and Development: Building Migration into Development Strategies

*Royal Society, London, 28–29 April 2008*

### CONFERENCE REPORT

#### Introductory Remarks

**Richard Black, Migration DRC Director, University of Sussex**

Richard Black provided a brief overview of the increased interest in links between migration and poverty alleviation since the start of the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC) in 2003. Among those who have taken an interest in this area in the last five years have been the United Nations, the European Commission, the World Bank, and the UK government. The Migration DRC, a project funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), has actively taken part in a number of these discussions. The centre, which is made up of university-based partners in Albania, Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, and the UK, has attempted to contribute to existing knowledge about migration on a number of fronts, including: (1) pursuing conceptual development of migration theory; (2) establishing improved sources of quantitative data on migration movements, through the establishment of a migration database; (3) focusing on the migration of poor people; and (4) giving a voice to migrants themselves. The areas most relevant to the Migration DRC's research are represented in the six sessions at this two-day conference.

#### Session One: Migration in Development Strategies

**Introduction:** Chair Martin Pluijm, from the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, suggested that the audience keep two questions in mind when listening to the speakers: (1) How should efforts to coordinate migration and development be put into practice?; and (2) how do we make the best use of different types of capital generated by migrants.

#### Migration and National Development Strategies

**Richard Black, Migration DRC Director, University of Sussex**

Richard Black's presentation focused on the extent to which migration has been considered in developing countries' Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), based on a recent review by the Migration DRC of 24 of the 26 PRSPs created since 2005. Overall, there is still a lack of attention paid to migration in these national development strategies—and where migration is mentioned it is often portrayed negatively. For example, in the PRSPs reviewed there was a widespread absence of references to internal migration; frequent mention of migrants as problematic (as contributing to crime, urban overcrowding, or health problems); a continued lack of coordination on thinking about migration across different policy areas; and a reluctance to listen to 'migrant voices'.

In addition to these broader points, Black provided an overview of the PRSPs of two countries where the Migration DRC has been conducting research with partner institutions: Ghana and Bangladesh. In Ghana's PRSP (2005), 'migration' is mentioned 28 times, but 15 of these references occur in relation to trafficking, pointing to a largely negative portrayal of migration in the country's development strategy. Ghana's PRSP sees growth in the country's slums as a result of rural-to-urban migration and states that there is a need to, 'Develop policies to address seasonal unemployment and migration for young women and men' – again indicating that migration is a problem. Ghana's development strategy does mention that migrant remittances have yielded investment in real estate and argues that policies should be implemented to ease the transnational transfer of such remittances, but this recommendation does not appear in the PRSP's policy matrix. Also, the country's strategy for population management is conceptualised as involving family planning, fertility, and sexual health—but makes no mention of migration.

Bangladesh's PRSP (2005) offers a different approach for integrating migration processes into national development strategies. Although the document possesses some conflicting representations of rural-urban migration, it does stress the fact that migration (especially the international variety) has opened up new options for the country's poor, including women. There is a whole section devoted to 'Development of Services for Migrant Workers', including migrant training, support for returnee migrants, more effective regulation of migrant recruiting agencies, and financial initiatives to help migrants afford the initial move overseas. The PRSP also mentions the need to communicate safe migration practices to children, and to ratify International Labour Organisation conventions on international migration. However, Bangladesh's policies focus mainly on migration of workers to the Gulf, marginalising other forms of migration that occur. Nevertheless, the PRSP represents a model for other countries who are seeking to integrate migration into national-level development strategies.

**Migration, Development and Poverty Reduction: The Case of Bangladesh**  
**Tasneem Saida Muna, Bangladesh High Commission, London**

Tasneem Saida Muna discussed the role of migration in Bangladesh's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. She indicated that the introduction of services for migrant workers as part of Bangladesh's 2005 PRSP, as outlined in Richard Black's presentation, helped contribute to rural poverty alleviation in the country. A mid-term review of the PRSP in 2007 indicated that along with the country's new policies on nutrition and education, Bangladesh's policies to facilitate easier migration had contributed to rising household incomes and an overall reduction in rural poverty that outstripped the progress seen in many other developing countries over the same two-year period.

However, there are still a number of challenges the country faces in relation to migration. The increase in rural-urban migration has put a strain on the country's urban infrastructure and social services. Meanwhile, a large proportion of the country's youngest residents remained trapped in poverty. Thus, facilitating easier international migration will continue to be a key development strategy for the Bangladeshi government, as a means of generating adequate capital for continued development.

**Policy Perspectives on International Migration and National Development in Sub-Saharan Africa**  
**Aderanti Adepoju, Human Resources Development Centre, Lagos**

Aderanti Adepaju began by looking at the 'macro-setting' of migration in existing development strategies in sub-Saharan Africa by focusing on the three D's: demography, development and democracy. Overall, acute poverty in the region remains high, with many people existing on less than US\$1 a day, and much of the available employment is in the informal sector where earnings are low. Virtually no progress had been made toward the Millennium Development Goals by 2005 – in fact, many areas targeted by the MDGs have further deteriorated. This worsening situation has seen regional migrant-receiving countries increasingly become sending countries, with a rise in attempted south-north migration by residents of sub-Saharan Africa. Political instability in many countries has also been a problem (see Zimbabwe, for example).

These difficulties are exacerbated by a general lack of attention paid to migration in PRSPs drafted by sub-Saharan countries. Furthermore, any potential policies on migration that could be put in place by these countries are handicapped by the unilateral migration policies of the north, which seek to stifle the flow of low-skilled migrants, on one hand, and recruit African skilled professionals, on the other. The latter trend has posed serious problems for the health workforces of many sub-Saharan countries.

Adepaju offered a number of ways forward for sub-Saharan countries and northern countries alike to help ease the current stagnation of development in the region. African countries should make poverty alleviation and employment generation cornerstones of their development agendas, as these will help create an environment where migration is a less attractive (or necessary) option – and should establish policies to better facilitate overseas remittances. Partnerships between African and northern countries are needed to open up the potential of return or circular migration for African skilled emigrants, and development programmes sponsored by the north which target sustainable employment generation and poverty alleviation are also badly needed.

#### **Discussant: Wies Maas, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Wies Maas provided a policymaker's perspective on the difficulty of building nuanced views of migration into development strategies pursued by northern countries. She stressed that migration today is discussed in a highly politicized environment and its analysis is in no way value-free. Given this, the role of academics is to try to change widely-held perspectives on migration that are often excessively negative and often inaccurate. She said that her ministry has focused on trying to understand a number of particular aspects of migration, including: the root causes of migration; brain drain and the potential for circular or return migration; and the potential for diaspora communities to aid development strategies. However, she added that it has been very difficult to introduce any policies that go beyond reinforcing border controls and limiting unwanted forms of migration—which have increasingly constituted the dominant priorities of northern countries' policies on migration. Maas also stressed that we should be cautious and not overemphasize the impact migration can have on development. She added that more emphasis should be placed on internal migration, which is often absent from policy discussions, and pointed out that engaging diaspora can often be a complex process for social or cultural reasons.

#### **General discussion**

**Questions overview:** Many of the questions from conference participants centred on the topic of remittances. The question of non-financial remittances (or social capital) was raised, as well as the exclusive nature of remittances, which typically flow specifically to families of migrants

and are usually not used in community-wide development schemes. Participants also touched on the issue of brain waste among refugees and other groups of migrants—a phenomenon that is often absent from national development strategies and was not touched on in any of the presentations. Also, one participant cautioned that the call for increased focus on migration in development strategies might have the effect of making negative views on migration still more popular among governments—further hindering migration flows through official channels. The issue of overseas migrants' working conditions was also raised; in many cases, remittances would be far more substantial if minimum workers' rights were enforced, ensuring better pay for migrants, which would translate into greater material support for their families.

The panellists indicated that while there was clearly a discrepancy in the power relations between north and south—and that migration was only one aspect of development—there is still room for developing countries to establish their own agendas in relation to migration that suit their specific development needs. Black pointed out that Bangladesh's PRSP, in particular, represented an example of a country taking ownership of its own development strategy, something which sub-Saharan African countries and others in the developing world could potentially benefit from doing—even if this represents only one aspect of a successful national development strategy.

## **Session Two: Poverty and Livelihoods**

### **Temporary Migration and Human Capital Investment in Origin Communities Ghazala Mansuri, World Bank Group**

Ghazala Mansuri's presentation focused on the impacts of migration on families in rural Pakistan who are left behind when temporary labour migrants leave to pursue work elsewhere. In particular, Mansuri explored the links between temporary migration and subsequent investments in education by these families, although her research has also included a look at health impacts and other productive investments families have made with funds earned through temporary labour migration.

Mansuri cited a 2005 study which showed that one in four males in rural households in Pakistan migrate to look for work, and 40 percent of these migrants travel overseas. These migrants stay away for five years on average, and make such trips an average of three times – pointing to the fact that migration for work is a long-term livelihood strategy for many men in the region. Two-thirds of these migrants are married with young children and half of them send home substantial remittances.

Mansuri noted that migration has a mixed effect on the education of children who are left behind when family members migrate. On one hand, migration can help secure more money for investment in children's education; conversely, the absence of family members can create a greater demand for children's labour in their homes, which may put a strain on their ability to pursue schooling in some cases. Overall, the gender gap in education, which usually favours boys, was reduced in migrant families. However, houses that were temporarily headed by females in the absence of male migrants (about 15 percent of migrant households in the study sample) appeared to experience increased vulnerability, with female children leaving school earlier in these instances than in other households.

### **Temporary Work Migration in Rural Bangladesh – Improving Livelihoods?**

### **Janet Seeley, University of East Anglia**

Janet Seeley presented the findings of a micro-study conducted by the Migration DRC in Gaibanda, a rural village in Northwest Bangladesh. Of the 444 households in the village, 83 were involved in some form of labour migration, with the vast majority of migrants being men who migrated within Bangladesh to look for work as agricultural workers, rickshaw pullers, carpenters, or, in the case of some elderly men, as beggars. In addition to this, a handful of women from the village migrated to Dhaka and other cities to work as housemaids.

Villagers' perceptions of migration varied widely. Carpenters and rickshaw pullers were among the groups that were often able to draw a steady wage from migration, but other groups, especially agricultural workers, often struggled to earn a decent income. Some saw migration as a way to secure funds for their families to eat more regularly, but those who migrated often would have preferred not to, as migrating for work carried a local stigma that was detrimental to individuals' or families' reputations in the village. Moreover, migration for work often involved migrants taking on types of labour which they did not consider desirable.

Migration as a livelihood strategy was mixed with other strategies, including taking out micro-credit loans from one of the six NGOs operating in Gaibanda and calling on extended family relations within the village for help in difficult times. In short, temporary labour migration is, and will continue to be, an important livelihood strategy for many families in Gaibanda who have little land and few employment opportunities locally.

### **Social Protection for Migrant Labour in the Ghana Pineapple Sector Stephanie Barrientos, University of Manchester**

Stephanie Barrientos noted that the Ghanaian pineapple sector represents an example of the global economy's trend toward flexible production, with export production numbers soaring recently—but there is an important caveat that market shocks present an acute risk for the sector, especially for smaller plantations. The country's pineapple farms, which are located in the eastern part of Ghana, north of Accra, produced US\$22 million worth of pineapples for export in 2004, with most of this produce headed for supermarkets in the UK, Germany and other EU countries. However, the Ghanaian pineapple industry underwent an unexpected shock in 2005, when European supermarkets switched from the 'Sweet Cayenne' variety of pineapple to 'MD2' variety mid-season, rendering most of Ghana's pineapple crop for the year un-sellable on the global market.

Barrientos said that most of the workers on the pineapple farms are migrants from other parts of Ghana. These workers are split into two main groups: Primary migrants, who are first-generation migrants, and often send remittances home to their villages; and secondary migrants, who are usually the children of migrants, and have less substantial connections to their 'home communities'. Primary migrants are often better educated, work on larger farms, and have more formalised work contracts and thus better pay and job security. Secondary migrants often work on smaller farms and in many cases lack formalised labour contracts and have less formal education than primary migrants, on average.

Barrientos and a Migration DRC team of researchers conducted over 20 in-depth interviews with pineapple workers and had 280 workers respond to a questionnaire. The study sample included 107 primary migrants, 147 secondary migrants, and 27 local workers. Overall, the study showed that while working in the pineapple sector provided most workers with a steady

source of income, some primary migrants had difficulty sending adequate remittances home to their families. Also, workers who lacked any formalised work contracts were especially vulnerable to potential market shocks.

### Discussant: Priya Deshingkar, Overseas Development Institute

Priya Deshingkar suggested that more work on internal migration is needed, as this kind of migration is often completely absent from policy discussions on migration. She noted that the three presentations look at three different streams of migration, and that's important, because while migration can bring benefits, these are often not straightforward: rather, they are context-specific, or even household-specific. The study of Pakistan shows how household structure affects investment; in Ghana, the pineapple sector itself is volatile, despite providing opportunities for waged labour; and the study of Bangladesh highlights the resourcefulness of families left behind.

Often the costs and risks of migration are imposed by a policy environment that is not pro-migration. Overall, migration is usually seen as being negative. Social protection measures provided by governments, such as food rations in India, typically do not take the presence of migrants into account. In India, there is also a lack of data on internal, short-term migration. ODI's research suggests that tens of millions, perhaps hundreds of millions, of Indians migrate seasonally, but there is no data to show this. This lack of data has an impact on policymakers' neglect of internal migrants, and contributes to the invisibility of temporary migrants in the eyes of the state.

These case studies discuss migratory patterns that are increasingly the norm in developing countries, and governments have been slow to respond to this situation. China is an exception, as the realisation that rural-urban migration is alleviating poverty has put internal migration on the policy agenda. In other situations, NGOs have tried to fill this gap, largely following four models: (1) subsidized services for a diverse range of migrants' needs; (2) market-based intervention, where industry pays part of the cost of migration journeys or remittance transfers; (3) establishment of migrant worker labour unions; and (4) the rehab model, employed by ActionAid and others, to release workers from bonded conditions.

### General discussion

**Questions overview:** Several questions centred on the relationship between internal migration and the nutritional needs of migrants' families – particularly with respect to the growing global food crisis. There were also queries about the differences between primary migrants and secondary migrants in Barrientos' presentation on the Ghanaian pineapple industry. Other questions included whether migrants borrowed money to pay for migration journeys; how remittances are sent home; how 'female-headed households' are defined in Mansuri's presentation; and the comparative importance of international and internal labour migration in terms of supporting families through remittances.

Mansuri said that her study indicated that nutrition among migrants' families left behind in Pakistan is helped by migration for labour, overall. Although internal migrants send back less money than international migrants, health and education benefits come from internal migration as well as international migration. Barrientos noted that because of the increasing dependence on wage labour created by the pineapple sector in Ghana, these workers are especially vulnerable to the current food crisis because they do not participate in the cultivation of small-

scale (or sustainable) agriculture which would provide them with a reserve food supply. John Anarfi of ISSER, who participated in the pineapple study, added that export pineapple farms have consolidated most of the farming land in the region, largely eliminating small-scale agriculture and making the region as a whole more vulnerable to rising food prices. Deshingkar said that internal migration in India had a major impact on nutrition, allowing more families to eat regularly.

Barrientos clarified that the differences between primary and secondary migrants are still being assessed, as data analysis for the project is not yet complete. Anarfi added that one factor which disadvantages secondary migrants is the poor quality of schooling in the rural areas where the pineapple farms exist.

Mansuri said that most migrants in Pakistan initially paid for migration through family savings, sometimes by selling land – rather than through loans from NGOs. Seeley said that in Bangladesh, remittances were either sent home via transfer or were carried home, which sometimes proved to be a perilous practice. Mansuri said ‘female-headed households’ in her study were defined as having no males present who were over 18 years old. Still, such families may have been influenced by extended male kin in instances where the male head of the household was absent, and indeed appeared to be more vulnerable overall than other migrant households surveyed.

### **Session Three: Migration and Skills**

#### **Migration, Skills and Development Ron Skeldon, University of Sussex**

Ron Skeldon's presentation began with a review of the past five years of the Migration DRC's work on skilled migration. This has involved a re-examination of the idea of ‘brain drain’, which has been one of the central theoretical understandings of skilled migration since the 1960s, and has traditionally maintained that the emigration of skilled professions from developing countries to developed economies is wholly negative, as it robs developed countries of their most skilled professionals who have oftentimes been trained with government funds.

More recent studies have indicated the need to rethink such one-dimensional notions of ‘brain drain’. Firstly, policies that have attempted to stop the out-migration of skilled professionals from less-developed countries have largely failed. In addition to this, there is increasing evidence that the mobility of skilled professionals can bring some benefits for sending countries, not only in terms of potential return or circular migration, but also through remittances. Also, most countries that ‘export’ large numbers of skilled professionals (such as India) have a significant supply of skilled workers. Conversely, out-migration from smaller countries with fewer training institutions can affect those countries more acutely. Also, skilled workers are increasingly funding their education privately through family funds, raising the issue of who owns their skills and whether states can ‘ethically’ restrict their attempts to seek more attractive employment overseas.

Migration DRC research on skilled migration has focused on the health sector, in particular. In Bangladesh, the practice of ‘exporting’ nurses to meet the needs of ageing populations in northern countries is beginning to be considered – reflecting new thinking about the emigration of skilled labour. In Ghana, meanwhile, there is an urgent need to meet the health needs of the rural population, which is related to an unbalanced distribution of health workers internally more

than it is to international brain drain. Overall, countries need to consider their place within the global economy and develop health strategies that will meet their needs while acknowledging the larger global context. Regional skills training centres in West Africa or South Asia perhaps present one strategy to be explored. Programmes are also needed that provide basic skills training for more localised labour markets – for example, public health officials could be trained to provide basic health care to rural populations in developing countries, which would be more practical than expecting trained doctors to take on such jobs. Overall, it is important to acknowledge that skilled migration is not a one-dimensional phenomenon, and we should approach policies of ‘ethical recruitment’, which are designed to limit the movement of skilled workers, with caution.

**Migration and Skills: The Bangladesh Story**  
**M. Omar Rahman, Independent University, Bangladesh**

M. Omar Rahman’s presentation started by outlining the ‘brain drain’ versus ‘brain gain’ debate, with reference to the case of Bangladesh and health professionals. It is impossible to stop skilled migration, and the problem with brain drain arises only if the country of origin is small, while it is not a significant problem for a large country such as India. The demographic aspects of brain drain—how many and where?—must be considered. Scholars need to collect better figures, while also recognising that definitions of skilled migrants may differ in different countries’ data on migration.

The Bangladeshi health sector provides a useful case study of brain drain versus brain gain. Bangladeshi health professionals have been migrating abroad with increased frequency, especially to the US and Canada. These health professionals are surely the ‘best and brightest’ and they often try to bring their families overseas with them, as opposed to sending home remittances. Rahman notes that Bangladesh could do more to make working in Bangladesh more attractive to health professionals, including setting up opportunities for Western healthcare providers to outsource radiological image reading and other services. Policies are also needed to address the lack of health professionals serving rural parts of the country, which could perhaps be developed through localised training programmes.

Finally, Rahman addressed the issue of what could be done to attract some of the Bangladeshi diaspora to invest back in the country. He proposed several possibilities, including: making educational standards globally consistent to facilitate international skilled migration; developing policies which are focused on specific professional groups; and increasing involvement of private firms. The expansion of private sector opportunities, in general, is one way to make skilled Bangladeshi migrants more open to the idea of returning to the country to work, as it could provide opportunities for global collaboration, more flexible contracts, and adequate infrastructure. In conclusion, Rahman also mentioned the beneficial effect of cultural initiatives such as ‘Diaspora Days’ in which the achievements and the recognition of the work done abroad by Bangladeshi migrants have been collectively celebrated.

**Pulling them out of poverty or pushing them abroad for business? Exodus of nurses  
 from India**

**Binod Khadria, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi.**

Binod Khadria’s presentation began by clarifying that skilled migrants – namely IT professionals, doctors, nurses, and intellectuals – constitute just one aspect of international labour migration, which unskilled and semi-skilled persons also engage in with increasing frequency. His focus



then shifted the migration of nurses out of India, in particular. Khadria discussed the findings of a survey he carried out with 40 nurses working in a hospital in Delhi. When considering future migration, the US proved to be the preferred destination while comparatively low remuneration in India was the main push factor.

The presentation also covered some of the ways in which the recruitment of students for nursing schools in India uses the possibility of overseas employment as an incentive to attract students. There is a gender bias element of these recruiting strategies, which are primarily directed at single or widowed women who will not migrate abroad with husbands. Even in instances where they remain in India, many nurses and doctors are actually employed by US firms which – through mobile information technology – use labs in India for reading medical scans and sending reports. Such practices have development implications for economies such as India's. While some in India may benefit over the short term from such practices, they cannot be easily integrated into a long-term development strategy for India as a whole.

#### **Discussant: Michael Clemens, Center for Global Development, USA**

Michael Clemens suggested that questions about the causation of poor health services in developing countries were manifold – though 'brain drain' has often been blamed for failures of health systems in the developing world. But there remain open questions about skilled labour migration: Does it cause low staffing levels in the country of origin? What about urban-rural discrepancies in doctor ratios in developing countries? These questions point to the fact that the effects of skilled migration vary with each country context.

Clemens emphasised the need to think beyond policies which are designed simply to limit the mobility of skilled professionals. Instead, policy should focus on the 'world which exists', where people *do* move, regardless of policies which attempt to stagnate this movement. He suggested that it is unethical to try to restrict the movement of skilled workers, and proposed that a pilot programme could be set up in Africa where people who wanted to train to be doctors could pay their own way in order to acquire skills. Such a programme could potentially start generating greater numbers of health professionals in Africa, without placing a burden on the state for funding their education.

#### **General discussion:**

**Question overview:** A number of questions focused on the issue of the cost of training professionals for developing countries. Given that skilled migration is impossible to stop, what is been the best way to reach the diaspora members abroad once they have migrated? A number of questions also addressed issues related to the recruitment of professionals from developing countries and asked whether this practice was 'ethical' and whether the countries of origin should propose some kind of 'agreement' by which expatriates should go back when the country needs them. In particular, a member of the UK government objected to Clemens' assertion that the UK's agreements with several African countries to limit aggressive recruitment of health professionals from those countries was 'unethical' – as indeed this policy had been initiated by African countries, not the UK. Other questions focused on the loss of human capital suffered by the countries of origin and what could be done to reduce it.

In response to these questions, panellists emphasised that no one should be forced to go back to the country of origin on the basis that he/she has been trained there in the past.

Particular emphasis was also placed during the discussion around the changing nature of immigration law in the UK and the possibility/impossibility to recruit directly from certain countries and how the point system in use discriminates *de facto* many skilled migrants who actually risk losing their skills while entering the UK if they are unable to find employment related to their previous training.

The panellists' answers to the many issues raised by the audience indicated the need to look at development strategies at least in part altruistically; also the question of who pays for training professionals who then migrate generated an animated discussion which pointed to the fact that skilled migration does not only involve developing countries but it also exists between developed countries. Data mentioned shows that skilled migrants are those who integrate better within the receiving societies but that still within the developed world we do have recurrent problems of brain waste and mismatching between skills and jobs and very often people work in fields in which they have not been trained for.

In terms of ethical recruitment, the discussion focused on whether recruitment of workers is ethical. Clemens argued that not providing information on working abroad to those who live in unstable or impoverished countries *is* unethical, as this unfairly punishes individuals who have worked to acquire skills.

Linked to this issue is the funding of educational systems in developing countries. One solution indicated in this area was to increase the number of private institutions in developing countries which could actually provide training for people from the urban middle classes who could afford to pay. For example, evidence from Bangladesh indicates that most students who are taking advantage of state-funded training are not poor students but rather middle-class students who could afford to pay for their education.

#### **Session Four: Approaches to Diaspora, Developing Country Options**

##### **Albania: Mobilising Highly Skilled Diaspora Eno Ngjela, United Nations Development Programme**

Eno Ngjela began by noting that Albania's diaspora population has played an increasingly large role in poverty alleviation in the country. As of 2007, an estimated 25 percent of Albania's population lived abroad, amounting to an estimated 35 percent of its workforce. Among the those with university educations, emigration has been especially acute, with a Migration DRC study released in early 2008 indicating that around 50 percent of the country's researchers and intellectuals had left the country since 1990, and about 66 percent of Albanian university students who studied abroad in Western Europe and the USA during the same time period did not return after earning their degrees. However, the Albanian diaspora sent home an estimated €947 million in 2007, more than three times what Albania attracted in direct foreign investment and twice what it received in development aid. These funds helped alleviate poverty levels in the country, but most of the money was expended on consumable goods, as opposed to being invested in long-term development strategies.

Given these substantial remittances, the Albanian government has increasingly tried to engage its diaspora population through both public and private measures. A series of government measures have sought to stimulate the return of skilled diaspora members from abroad. These policies have included raising academic salaries and creating 400 new positions in higher education targeted at recent graduates who have studied abroad. This has occurred alongside

the liberalisation of higher education in the country, which has seen the recent establishment of 10-12 private universities and the doubling of the country's university student enrolment numbers. The government has also created salary incentives in an effort to attract diaspora members to jobs in the public sector and has introduced soft loans and low-interest mortgages aimed at diaspora members. These measures have been complimented by laws which make return migration easier for members of the Albanian diaspora.

These measures mark merely the first steps in the Albania government's attempt to engage with its diaspora population, which it sees as part of an overall strategy for development which it hopes will eventually lead to consideration for EU membership. Return migration is seen as being essential to the long-term restructuring of the country's education system, while a more comprehensive country labour profile needs to be carried out to determine the country's most pressing labour needs. Policies must also be aimed to 'retain brains' – not simply to encourage return migration. The IT sector presents a possible area for growth, with current penetration of Internet access in the country limited to 60 out of every 1,000 Albanians.

**Policy Options of Countries of Origin in Encouraging Diaspora Participation: The Issue of Dual- and Multiple-Citizenships**  
**Tasneem Siddiqui, RMMRU, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh**

Tasneem Siddiqui noted that one way in which governments have tried to reach out to their diaspora populations – and encourage return or circulation migration – is to introduce dual or multiple citizenship programmes, or at least to provide some legal rights to members of their diaspora that are usually reserved for citizens. She defined 'diaspora' broadly for the purposes of the presentation: As people living outside their country of origin who, even if they have not retained their citizenship, continue to possess strong economic, political, social and/or emotional ties to it.

Siddiqui pointed out that diaspora populations are not homogenous, and some governments have sought to target particular segments of their diaspora populations with dual-citizenship measures. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to pursue such a policy in 1978, as the country's military government offered citizenship to its diaspora members living in the UK, the US, and Australia. The Philippines, meanwhile, created a dual-citizenship policy in 2003 that was open to its diaspora members living in any country in the world. India, by contrast, extended economic rights to its diaspora members in 2003, but stopped short of extending political rights to them.

These policies have had mixed results in terms of engaging the respective diaspora groups in question. In the case of India, the extension of full economic rights to the Indian diaspora aided existing diaspora investment, but this may have had as much to do with the country's overall development as with the government's extension of additional rights to diaspora members. In Bangladesh, the private sector, including banks, universities, and hospitals, has played a key role in encouraging the return of the country's diaspora, in addition to the country's dual citizenship measures. Bureaucratic hindrances, meanwhile, have caused some large-scale investment bids launched by members of the Bangladeshi diaspora to collapse completely. The Philippines has seen members of its diaspora invest as philanthropic groups, as they have helped to build hospitals, roads, and IT infrastructure in the country. These examples show that there is nothing to indicate that dual-citizenship policies are a panacea, and their success partly depends on the individual conditions which exist in each country – and the nature of the diaspora population itself.

**Diaspora and Development: The Indian Experience**  
**S.K. Sasikumar, V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, India**

S.K. Sasikumar noted that the Indian diaspora constitutes a huge potential resource in terms of financial and human capital. It is currently estimated to consist of 25 million members, but this a heterogeneous population that has been part of different historical waves of migration, most recently high-skilled workers moving to the economic north and low-skilled workers moving to the Gulf and other countries in South Asia. Emigration has increased across all categories of migrants in the past decade, with migration to the USA and Canada, in particular, doubling or tripling in the last 10-15 years.

The Indian government has undertaken a number of measures to try to engage particular segments of the diaspora. This has included the establishment of the Ministry for Overseas Indian Affairs in 2004, in an effort to confront the lack of coordination of government policy on migration. This was an important step, as even attention to skilled migrants by government agencies had previously been non-existent. There was also an expansion of the Overseas Citizen of India programme, providing lifelong, visa-free travel to India for members of the diaspora, as well as full economic rights. A 'Know India' programme, which provides trips around the country for diaspora youth, has also been established, and a university for persons of Indian origin located in India is being discussed as a possibility for the future.

Sasikumar indicated that it is too early to judge the long-term success of these policies. Diaspora remittances totalled US\$27 billion in 2007 (a figure that does not include investments made by non-residents Indians in the country), and such remittances have been shown to significantly reduce poverty rates in states such as Kerala. IT professionals have also increasingly returned to the country to set up business centres, although this is arguably due to the larger trends of economic growth in India as opposed to government policies. However, there has been an important split between attracting highly skilled diaspora back from abroad, on one hand, and ignoring the need for social protection policies for low-skilled Indian labour migrants, on the other. This is an area that is currently lacking in the Indian government's engagement with its diaspora population.

**Discussant: Claire Mercer, University of Leicester**

Claire Mercer noted that the term 'diaspora' opens up new ways for thinking about people's mobility, and is perhaps a less derogatory term than 'migrant', which often carries negative connotations. The presentations, she said, focused mostly on the ways in which governments have approached members of diaspora as individuals who possess resources, in accordance with neoliberal economic policies. In addition to this view, Mercer invited the audience to consider the ways in which members of diaspora populations contribute to national development as groups. For example, 'hometown associations', which tend to be made up of low-skilled migrants, typically send money home to support projects in their home communities.

Policymakers want to engage with diaspora populations, but how? Diaspora populations are often splintered, making engagement a difficult task. At the same time, diaspora groups exist organically, and they should not be forced into conceptual boxes by policymakers. In addition to this, it is not productive to try to see diaspora solely through an 'ethnic lens'. Importantly, diaspora members' investments in home countries are often secondary to their concerns in their new country of residence – even when their investment in countries of origin is substantial.

## General discussion

**Questions overview:** One participant pointed out that the diaspora approach taken by some governments is a new approach vis-à-vis encouraging return migration, and that even policies which promote engagement with highly skilled migrants have focused on encouraging short-term investment in business and industry and neglected more long-term needs such as investment in health and education. Others pointed out that the number of people who qualify for dual citizenship in Bangladesh is actually rather small, and questioned policies which engage directly with diaspora groups, as this would likely involve a policy which would 'pick winners'. Another participant raised the role of destination countries, many of whom have hostile policies toward circular or return migration. Another audience member added that there have been hometown associations in West Africa for at least the past 40 years; these started out as networks established in response to and increase in internal and regional migration and have now been adapted the context of north-south migration. The issue of skills shortages in countries covered in the presentations was also raised.

Sasikumar said that there are skill shortages in India but contended that migration is not putting a significant stress on these areas. He said that India is exploring ways to accredit skills that are at an EU-level of accreditation. He added that 'hometown associations' were a salient feature of the Indian diaspora, and, among other things, have provided disaster relief help following natural disasters. These diaspora groups are potential partners for policies which build migration processes into development strategies. He reiterated that more state planning at the grassroots level is crucial for engaging all segments of India's diaspora.

Siddiqui said that while hometown associations consisting of members of the Bangladeshi diaspora are common in North America, it is difficult for the Bangladeshi government to engage with them because of their inter-group rivalry. The exception to this is the Bangladeshi lobby in Washington DC, which is also a hometown association, of sorts. She also pointed out that policy coordination with destination countries is important. For example, Bangladesh had been developing skilled workers in the catering sector to come to the UK, before the UK government altered its immigration policy, rendering the programme irrelevant.

## Session Five: Independent Child Migration

### Children Moving on Their Own in Developing Countries

Ann Whitehead, University of Sussex

Ann Whitehead started her presentation by explaining what was meant by 'independent child migration within developing countries' and explained the research carried out by the Migration DRC in this area in Bangladesh, Ghana, Burkina Faso and India. A brief report on the main findings of these studies was presented, supported by qualitative insights from interviews with child migrants which pointed out that the motives surrounding child migration are more than purely economic and include aspirations towards maturity and self-betterment. In the cases of both West Africa and South Asia, child migration was especially prevalent in areas with high rates of adult migration.

The main point that was made is that not all child migrants are 'victims' who are forced to move – indeed some actually choose to do so, even if they are often perceived by outsiders and

researchers as not having other choices. This common misinterpretation is linked to an over representation of child migration as necessarily involving child trafficking. In the second part of the presentation an overview of the legal and human rights framework for the defence of children was presented and assessed in light of the Migration DRC's research findings, which highlighted the complexity of the decision-making processes among children. Whitehead noted that the current definitions of child trafficking can inadvertently make many child migrants more vulnerable, and she proposed a wider conceptualisation of child migration, which does not portray children as neither 'heroes' or 'victims' but which aims to promote a more realistic picture of child migrants, many of whom resourcefully migrate from underdeveloped rural areas in search of better opportunities.

### **Impact of Migration on Children Left Behind in Developing Countries** **Andrea Rossi, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government**

Andrea Rossi's presentation began by stressing the importance of children in the decisions of their parents to migrate, reminding the audience that one of the most common reasons for people to migrate is to provide a better future for their children. Children are affected by their parents' decision to migrate in diverse ways: they may eventually move themselves, joining their parents or relatives in a new community or country; they may go for long periods without seeing one, or perhaps both, of their parents; and their lives may be shaped by a collective experience of coming from communities where migration is a common occurrence. Rossi stressed the importance of looking at the multiple dimensions of the impact of migration on the well-being of children by taking into consideration different aspects of their lives such as education, economic activities, health and psycho-social factors – all of which are interrelated.

In terms of available quantitative data, migration has been shown to have positive effects on children's health, with migrant households being linked to lower child mortality rates and better nutrition for children. However, macro-data figures on migration show it has a mixed impact on children's schooling, in some cases providing funds which allow children to stay in school longer, in other cases making households more dependent on children's labour in the absence of adults. The psycho-social costs of migration may be very great for children, as they may spend significant amounts of time apart from their parents, or in cases where they migrate they may be forced to cope with negative attitudes towards migrants. These costs, however, are extremely difficult to measure.

Whether they stay behind or move to a new location, children are intricately bound up in migration processes. More needs to be done to bring the challenges faced by 'migrant households' to the attention of policymakers, who often narrowly focus on policies which only address the specific issues faced by migrants themselves.

### **Mobility of Children and Youth in West Africa: Re-imagining West African Societies** **Guy Massart, Plan International**

Guy Massart's presentation focused on Plan International's work in West Africa. He stressed the need to avoid generalisations when thinking in terms of child migration and he pointed to diverse causes of child mobility within West Africa, specifically in Niger and Guinea Bissau. He stressed the positive connotations that being mobile brings for West African youth – 'in Niger if you don't move, you are a loser, no woman will want to marry you'. He discussed the need for academics and policymakers to re-imagine how rural life-cycles unfold. For example, most children in West Africa learn to farm by the time they are seven years old; by the time they are

11 or 12 years old, many children are working independently. In short, many children in West Africa develop a sense of responsibility at a very young age.

Massart pointed out that the idea that migrating at an early age generates a trauma is overestimated – indeed, children in West Africa who *do not* move, especially girls, may be traumatized through local conditions or practices, perhaps to a greater extent than most child migrants in the region. Child migration often forms an integral part of children's pursuit of their dreams, as migration gives them a better chance to be a 'somebody'. The role that 'miracles makers' such as footballers, dancers, wrestlers have on the collective imagination of children is important to acknowledge here. Thus, migration serves partly as an instrument to broaden children's life-worlds and opportunities.

#### **Discussant: Jo Boyden, Young Lives Project, Oxford University.**

Jo Boyden highlighted the merits and the contributions of each paper. In particular, she mentioned Rossi's creative use of quantitative data and both Whitehead and Massart's qualitative insights into child migration, stressing how rare it is to actually find research on children which is focused on the children themselves. In particular, Boyden stressed the importance of looking at migration as a natural human process, as a product of aspirations, which for children also reflect the eagerness to become fully-fledged adults.

She noted that the presentations' sensitive approaches to child migration contrasted sharply with the normative approach, which is focused on notions of child trafficking and the forced movement of children. She argued that this focus is partly due to a Western fixation on 'dangerous strangers' and the idea that children are in danger if they are not looked after by their families. Related to this point is the idea that we need to control children, and that migrating will induce a change in values or behaviours which are negative for children. This is often accompanied by the notion that the household is the only possible healthy option for a child, while other options are never to be considered. Boyden emphasised how the session presented a new focus on those issues by highlighting the gains and the potential benefits that migration may have for children. These are not historically isolated examples, she said, but are part of a long historical trend of human migration, which children have been involved in to a considerable degree.

#### **General discussion**

**Question overview:** Conference participants asked for more clarification of the terminology used to describe child trafficking/migration in the West African context and what kinds of policies should be pursued to support child migrants. The concept of child agency generated a number of questions, including whether advocating for child agency would serve to justify structural forces and push factors behind children's decisions to migrate, such as the failure of governments to pursue better policies in underdeveloped regions. The question of how to balance the legal age of adulthood with the local lifecycles was also raised. The issue of the numbers of child migrants in West Africa was raised, as was the concern that increasing the profile of child migrants might make governments who otherwise ignore them more eager to stop their movement.

Whitehead clarified that her work on child migration was not meant to condone the failure of governments to eliminate the 'push' factors of migration – or to claim that the conditions which perpetuate high migration rates are acceptable. Nevertheless, the present discourse on child

migration serves to exacerbate the situation of many child migrants, who are often seeking to escape from difficult economic situations, by contributing to negative portrayals of child migrants.

In terms of the human rights debate, the panellists stressed that even though the theoretical framework offered by the recognition of the rights of the child is valid and important, in practice these conventions are not working very well for migrants. The panellists pointed to the failure of the education system in West Africa in supporting the children and advocated for a more pragmatic view when thinking in terms of future policies in this area. They emphasised that if their presentations seemed provocative, it was because they were trying to challenge the normative view that 'children should stay at home'. If people move it is because they want a better life. This is a sign of the failure of the state but there is no point in trying to stop migrants – children included – as this will only make their situation worse.

The panellists stressed that child migrants often lack access to basic services, such as healthcare or education, especially when they cross national borders illegally. More programmes are needed to help eradicate poverty in areas with high amounts of child migration, and an acknowledgement of the social protection child migrants require is also needed. Sensitive debates at the national and regional level about what constitutes acceptable labour for children to undertake are also needed.

The session chair, Stephen Kwankye of ISSER, concluded the session by stating that more research is needed in order to better understand why children migrate, as this is by no means a one-dimensional process. Children who migrate do not do so solely to escape poverty but may have other goals and desires in mind as well.

## **Session Six: Migration Partnerships**

### **Female Domestic Workers in Cairo Ray Juredini, American University of Cairo**

Ray Juredini's presentation focused on a Migration DRC study of informal domestic workers in Cairo, many of whom are migrants from other African countries, The Philippines or South Asia. He noted that the existence of informal domestic workers is not an Egyptian phenomenon, but is rather a middle class phenomenon that is present throughout the Middle East, as well as the rest of the world. Such workers are technically invisible under Egyptian labour laws, which consider domestic work to be part of the private realm, and thus not regulated by the state. Additionally, Egypt has yet to ratify ILO conventions related to foreign labour migrants which would extend some social protection measures to these workers. Thus, these female domestic workers in Cairo have few rights, and the study Juredini supervised in which 781 female domestic workers were interviewed indicated that a significant number of these women are often exposed to verbal abuse (59 percent of respondents) and physical abuse (27 percent of respondents) by both the men and women who inhabit the households in which they are employed.

Juredini pointed out that a number of partnerships could help to ease this situation. Egypt's ratification and enforcement of the ILO Convention could extend rights to informal migrant workers. Bilateral agreements between sending and receiving countries represent another possibility to improve social protection measures for informal domestic workers, but these are often politically fragile and difficult to construct. For example, a formal agreement between



Egypt and Saudi Arabia, in which the former would have sent a set number of domestic workers to the latter to work at reduced rates of pay, fell apart after the details of the agreement were leaked to the Egyptian press, which criticized the Egyptian government's willingness to agree to such a plan. In addition to such measures, Juredini said that there is a potential role for civil society to play in helping secure better conditions for informal domestic workers. For example, a recent human rights campaign in Jordan by Human Rights Watch has sought to bring much-needed scrutiny to the frequent mistreatment of domestic workers by their employers. This could perhaps serve as a model for other civil society groups looking to raise awareness about the difficult conditions in which many informal domestic workers live.

**Migration Partnerships: Means to Minimise Risks and Costs of Recruitment**  
C.R. Abrar, RMMRU, University of Dhaka

C.R. Abrar highlighted a handful of potential partnerships on the inter-country level and also within sending countries which could help to make the process of international labour recruitment more transparent and less exploitative. Agreements are needed between sending and receiving countries to formalise migration processes, which could help make the extension of rights to labour migrants more viable. Here, creating a more positive public perception of migrants in receiving countries is vital. There is also an urgent need for more substantial agreements on labour migration between different migrant-sending countries. Competition between sending countries is highly counterproductive in terms of ensuring social protection and adequate wages for labour migrants, and regional agreements which establish minimum standards for 'labour exportation' should be considered.

At the intra-government level, sending countries must do more to make formalised migration a more efficient process. Providing pre-departure training for migrants and facilitating transnational remittance flows are two important areas for government coordination across government agencies. Governments can also do more to integrate NGOs into social protection programmes for departing migrants. Broader partnerships with the private sector and other elements of civil society in facilitating various aspects of migration recruitment and return are also to be encouraged. However, the relative power of private recruiting agencies, which often serve as the *de facto* authority on out-migration, currently represents a significant limitation that must be overcome.

**Migration Partnerships Internationally, and How They Can Be Exploited in the Interest of Pro-Poor Development**  
William Gois, Migrant Forum in Asia, The Philippines

William Gois noted that the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA), which is an activist organisation, has tried to establish partnerships with groups whose interests are interconnected with migration processes, as opposed to focusing solely on migration *per se*. They have employed an 'inside-outside' approach, engaging with various government bureaucracies, on one hand, but also organising public events, including protests, on the other. They have sought to link up with other civil society groups which are interested in the areas of human rights, gender, trade and development – all of which are issues that interface with migration processes. They have also worked with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in an effort to add migrants' voices to migration policy debates.

Broadly speaking, MFA has sought to highlight the positive contributions made by migrant workers to economies, which is something that is not often measured – and thus is largely

absent from policy discussions – in an attempt to introduce a counter-argument to discourses which vilify migrants. For instance, how much did the migrant workforce contribute the rise of the Asian Tiger economies, which all possessed large migrant workforces? Migrants participate actively in the economies of their host countries as consumers as well, not just as workers. The MFA has been trying to raise the profile of this critical contribution made by migrant labour to developing countries.

Gois noted that labour migrants increasingly face financial barriers to migration, as well as legal ones. Though much has been made of migrants' need for skills, skills alone are not enough to guarantee employment. Increasingly, labour migration requires a large initial investment that requires access to capital, which is a difficult hurdle for many migrants to overcome.

#### **Discussant: Piyasiri Wickramasekara, International Labour Organisation, Geneva**

Piyasiri Wickramasekara noted that global, regional, and bilateral partnerships were needed in order to reach humanitarian goals related to migration. Many countries have been reluctant to sign ILO conventions on international migrant labour, but the sentiment of countries is slowly changing. Even countries in the Gulf are becoming increasingly concerned with their human rights reputations and are more open to negotiation on social protection measures than in the past. However, many agreements that have been negotiated so far have been non-binding – which has been a necessary condition in order to secure any significant participation from countries in the north. Most significant, however, is the lack of state regulation over the private sector, which facilitates most labour migration, and thus determines to a large extent the relative vulnerability of many labour migrants.

#### **General discussion**

**Questions overview:** A participant from Egypt indicated that the Egyptian government had received no formal complaints about domestic workers in Cairo regarding maltreatment by employers, and suggested that the problem of domestic workers' rights was less significant in Egypt than in countries with larger numbers of domestic workers – such as the USA. Others echoed Gois' argument that the contribution of migrant labour needs to be documented, as indeed this has historically played a key role in the development of many countries, including the UK. There were also queries about what role international negotiations were having in discussions of migrant rights, including the questions: (1) is there a role for the Economic Community of West African States in facilitating the mobility of migrants? And (2) what is the current status of negotiations on migration between South Asian and Gulf countries? There was also a query about what issues should be raised at the Global Forum on Migration that will occur in Manila at the end of October 2008.

Gois reiterated that the discourse of human rights is often absent from debates on labour migration, and this is an area where civil society groups can contribute the push for migrant rights. Another problem to be addressed is competition between sending countries, including countries in ASEAN. Overall, there is a lack of formalised bilateral agreements on migration between Asian countries, and agreements which do exist are usually memorandums of understanding which cannot act as an instrument to protect workers' rights. Wickramasekara indicated that most bilateral agreements on migration are security-driven, lack transparency, and are designed to curb irregular migration. There is a real need for country partnerships which are based on equal terms, that include: a mutual recognition of migrants' positive impact

on economies of both host and sending countries; and acknowledgement of migrant rights; shared ownership of the costs and risks of migration; and which are driven by common goals.

Abrar noted that academics have a vital role to play in better informing the media in order to dispel the negative attitudes which surround migration in the north. He also reiterated that there is a need for migration partnerships on a number of different levels, including regional agreements between states and bilateral agreements for more long-distance forms of migration (including south-north migration). Juredini added that one way to better facilitate migrants' rights would be to set up regulated placement agencies in receiving countries. However, imposing any sort of minimum standards is problematic, in the sense that this could potentially eliminate work contracts for those workers that do have them. Juredini added that his study was not meant to suggest that the plight of Egyptian migrant workers is particularly dire – again restating that informal domestic workers are present in virtually every country that possesses a significant middle-class population. He said that it was not surprising that the government had not received any formal complaints, as any undocumented worker who complains risks losing their job.

Session chair Md. Abdul Matin Chowdhury from the Bangladeshi Ministry of Expatriates Welfare closed the session by sharing his ministry's experience of migration partnerships. He emphasised that agreements between countries are important in facilitating migrant mobility, as are skills training programmes, both of which have increasingly been prioritised in Bangladesh. He said the government of Bangladesh had engaged in consular dialogues with the United Arab Emirates, South Korea and Qatar, and was hoping to continue such talks in the future with a view towards the countries working together with shared interests.

### **Concluding Remarks**

**Richard Black, Migration DRC Director, University of Sussex**

Richard Black noted that while the conference had illustrated many of the difficulties that arise from northern countries' attempts to restrict certain types of migration, there is still work to be done in terms of proposing policies that can serve as viable alternatives to this policy approach. The conference marked a step towards a more coherent approach to alternative policies on migration, and Black suggested that this should be one of the priorities of the Global Forum on Migration and Development taking place in Manila in October 2008.