

Migration Partnerships

Means to Minimise Risks and Costs of Recruitment

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*Integrating Migration into Development Strategies Conference of
the DRC on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, London
28-29 April 2008*

Focus of the Presentation

- Highlight possible avenues for establishing migration partnerships in order to minimise risks and costs associated with overseas labour recruitment practices.
 - The agents to be involved in this partnership and the agenda to be pursued by these partnerships have been identified on the basis of recent research on overseas recruitment practices in South Asia.
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The Context I: Importance of Migration to National Economies

Developing countries total receipt US\$ 239.7b in 2007

South Asia's share of remittance	US\$	% of GDP
India	US\$ 27.0b	2.8
Bangladesh	US\$ 6.4b	8.8
Pakistan	US\$ 6.1b	4.0
Sri Lanka	US\$ 2.7b	8.7
Nepal	US\$ 1.6 b	18.0

True size will be larger than officially recorded

The Context II: Why Study the Recruitment Industry?

- Since the mid-1970s short term contract migration has become an important factor of economic development of some South Asian states
 - By the 1980s private recruitment industry emerged as an important actor in the migration process of all South Asian countries
 - So far no concerted effort to examine the recruitment industry in the region
 - Despite its important contribution in exploring new markets and the existence of legislative and institutional frameworks the recruitment sector is beset with problems
 - High costs of migration
 - Non-transparency contributing to hardships of MWs
 - Lack of accountability
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The Study: Recruitment Industry in South Asia

RMMRU-DRC collaboration with SAMReN partners

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Jagannath Adhikari, Nepal Institute of Development Studies, Nepal

Kanthi Yapa, independent consultant (ex-ILO official), Sri Lanka

C R Abrar, RMMRU, Bangladesh (Study coordinator)

Brainstorming Session to discuss research questions and methodology in Kathmandu in July 2007

Dissemination workshop in Dhaka in June 2008 to be attended by among others representatives of government, recruitment industry and returnee workers.

A publication and a model Code of Conduct

Study Objectives

- ❑ To review the functions of recruitment institutions and the role they perform as an agency in migration process.
 - ❑ To examine structures, forms and importance of recruitment institutions.
 - ❑ To analyse the effectiveness of regulatory system in operation.
 - ❑ To identify the role of civil society in effective management of recruitment systems.
 - ❑ To learn from national experiences and identify elements for developing a common code of conduct for South Asian region.
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Inter-Country Migration Partnerships

Partnership between Sending and Receiving Countries

Goals:

- To ensure welfare of MWs deployed
- To ensure protection of their rights and transform exploitative conditions

Ideal forms of Partnership:

- Bilateral agreements and MoUs: can lead to orderly migration systems between countries.
- Partnership between CSOs of sending and receiving countries

Problem:

- RCs generally reluctant.
- Recently they appear to be amenable.
- Abu Dhabi Forum in March 2008: Mutual recognition that problems exist that require solution at both ends. Partnership essential.

Possible Course of Action:

- Increased dialogue and discussion
 - Ratification of UN and ILO Convention pertaining to labour migration
 - Collaborative research highlighting the contribution of MWs to receiving countries
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Inter-Country Migration Partnerships II

Partnership between Labour Sending Countries

Goals:

- Curtail unhealthy competition between SC that adversely affect wage and work conditions of less skilled migrant workers.
- Fix agreed minimum wage rate for certain categories of unskilled labour
- Enhancing the incomes of unskilled migrants and their families

Ideal forms of Partnership:

- Agreement on a Common Labour *Standard for Out-going MW of South Asia* under the ambit of SAARC (Model Declaration prepared by SAMReN workshop participants)

Problem

- Reluctance of states to discuss migration

Possible Course of Action:

- Active engagement of the civil society institutions with respective governments and across national boundaries.
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Partnership within Sending Countries I

Co-ordination among Ministries and agencies

Goals:

- Mitigate problems encountered by the MWs and also eliminating irregular migration

Ideal forms:

- Proper co-ordination among various ministries and agencies (Labour, Expatriate Affairs and Overseas Employment, Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Civil Aviation etc.)
- Coordination both at ministry as well as field levels

Problem:

- Lack of identification of lead agency
- Mutual distrust and lack of confidence

Possible Course of Action:

- National recognition of the importance of the sector
 - Creation of a high level inter-agency coordination body
 - Enhanced capacity of missions in the countries of deployment
 - Setting of up a National Task Force
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Partnership within Sending Countries II

Partnership between State, Recruiting Agencies and the Civil Society Institutions

Goals:

- Accessing the wealth of information available with private recruiting institutions
- Impart effective Pre-departure Orientation Programme
- Devise Policies for Successful Return and Reintegration

Ideal Forms of Partnership:

- Accountable and transparent recruitment industry
- Effective Government-Private Sector-CSO cooperation

Problems:

- Lack of mutual recognition of the role of stakeholders
 - Unwarranted political clout of the recruitment industry
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Conclusion

- ❑ BLAs and MOUs between sending and receiving countries are likely to go a long way to reduce vulnerability of MWs and better regulate migration flows
 - ❑ Multilateral agreements among sending countries should be considered to curb unhealthy competition
 - ❑ Policies that promote increased synergy among government agencies could help to streamline migration process to the benefit of MWs.
 - ❑ Active collaboration between states, private sector and civil society partners are important to inform migrants about safe and successful migration.
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