



# Migrating out of Poverty

RESEARCH PROGRAMME CONSORTIUM



# Migrating out of Poverty

Ten Years of Research on Internal, Regional, and  
International Labour Migration in Africa and Asia

## The Migrating out of Poverty research partnership

African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS), University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC), Kenya

Asia Research Institute (ARI), Singapore

Centre for Migration Studies (CMS), University of Ghana, Ghana

Département de Sociologie, Université Assane SECK de Ziguinchor, Senegal.

Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), based at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), Bangladesh  
University of Sussex (US)

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Members: JoAnn McGregor, Anne-Meike Fechter, Michael Collyer

## Consortium Advisory Group (2012–2017)

Chair: Dilip Ratha

Members: Aderanti Adepoju, Manolo Abella, Cynthia Bantilan, Rosemary Vargas-Lundius, Hania Zlotnik

## In memory of Professor John Oucho (1943–2017)

This report is dedicated to the memory of our friend and colleague Professor John Oucho.

John was an eminent scholar of migration in Africa and had a long association with the Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium. Migration was his mission and his passion and we all learned a lot from his vast experience and deep insights into African migration. He is missed but his legacy will live on.

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Above

### Migrating out of Poverty events 2015–2019.

Photos (top to bottom): © Tekalign Ayalew; Hania Zlotnik; Allison Baldasare; Stuart Robinson

### Front cover

Pamela Mthunzi, from Zimbabwe, is a domestic worker in Johannesburg.

Photo: © Mark Lewis, 2018



A *marabout* from a village in the Kolda region holding a rosary. The telephone connects him with migrants or their families. Next to it is a book and against the wall a tablet called a '*Halwaa*', on which are written holy verses.

Photo: © Malika Diagana, 2019

## About Migrating out of Poverty

The Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium was a ten-year, multidisciplinary, multi-country, research and uptake partnership.

At its heart, the consortium sought to generate robust comparable evidence and improve analysis to understand how and why migration plays such a significant role in poverty reduction in some contexts, but not in others.

The consortium's multidimensional view of poverty, innovative combination of research methods, and clear focus on the gendered drivers, experiences, and impacts of migration combined to provide a powerful conceptual toolkit for exploring the transformational potential of migration on poverty, and to identify the many small and large social transformations that are both leading to new categories of migrants and emerging locally as a result of migration.

We are equally proud of the contribution of consortium partners to policy debates and practice on internal, regional, and international migration, as well as debates related to refugees, human trafficking, and modern slavery. The evidence generated by the programme has been instrumental in informing the design of a number of key government policies and decisions.

Finally, the opportunity for partners to learn and share knowledge across such a breadth and depth of experience may provide the final and longest lasting legacy from the Migrating out of Poverty programme. The consortium's collaborative and comparative approach has helped to nurture and maintain capacity that should strengthen the sector and deepen the quality of evidence available to decision makers for years to come.

## Key achievements

- Comparative and longitudinal household data generated by bespoke migration surveys. The African survey data have been used by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in two flagship reports (UNCTAD's *Economic Development in Africa Report 2018: Migration for Structural Transformation* and the FAO's report *The State of Food and Agriculture 2018: Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development*).
- Multi-sited, rigorous qualitative studies of migration into low-paid occupations of construction labour and domestic work which are globally significant for migrants from historically disadvantaged communities and regions. The research found common patterns cutting across cultural, political, and economic contexts. Migrants are positioned in precarious work conditions in receiving countries where they have few rights. But such employment is crucial for poverty reduction in the longer term.
- Concerted research on the impact of migration on the gender dynamics in communities with high rates of migration revealed important gender differences in the objectives behind investment in education, the jobs desired for children, and how children were affected when remittances dried up. Conjugal relations changed due to migration but not necessarily empowering women or creating more equality. These findings are important for social development policies and initiatives aiming at gender equality.
- Media Network on Migration journalists' network established with the assistance of the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) successfully changed the nature of the debate on migration in Ghana from a predominantly negative discourse to one that recognises the potential of migration for poverty reduction and development.
- Spin-offs into other large research projects including the newly launched Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Hub on South–South Migration involving the CMS; the British Academy project on Brokered Migration for Domestic Work and Construction Work in Ghana and Myanmar, and a Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT)-funded project on Capitalizing Human Mobility for Poverty Alleviation and Inclusive Development in Myanmar.



Migrants, while clandestinely transported by truck from Ethiopia to Djibouti.

Photo: © Sisay Demile, 2018

# Generating knowledge and understanding

Since its launch in July 2010, the Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium has built up a unique and robust body of evidence on the relationship between migration and poverty across five regions (South Asia; Southeast Asia; East, West, and Southern Africa) in the global South. Research was conducted in 11 countries: Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Singapore, and Indonesia.

Migrating out of Poverty was implemented in three evolving phases, with learning carried from one phase to the next, to adapt methods and research questions as research findings emerged and policy priorities evolved. The programme has had a deep and lasting impact on the academic community, policymakers, and civil society, not only in the specific countries where research was conducted but also in surrounding regions and internationally, as evidenced through research engagement and policy impact that can be attributed to us.

In Phase 1, partners conducted research on themes that responded to local policy priorities. This phase was also marked by the reorientation of research capacities and policy advocacy to internal and regional migration which had hitherto focused on international South–North migration.

In Phase 2, research explored four interconnected themes identified through consultation between all Migrating out of Poverty partners: Gender and Generation, Income and Remittances, the Migration Industry, and Policy Processes.

The first three themes continued in Phase 3 but with a more ambitious focus on the migration industry, covering more countries and research locations in order to better understand mediated migration experiences during complicated journeys. Two new partners joined Migrating out of Poverty: Université Assane SECK de Ziguinchor in Senegal, to focus on the under-researched



Satellite office of the Department of Home Affairs in Johannesburg's inner city.  
Photo: © Mark Lewis

Casamance region; and the University of Addis Ababa/OSSREA focusing on the Horn of Africa, an important country of origin, transit, and destination for migrants. Phase 3 projects followed a comparative methodology to increase coherence, and generate a body of work which would have a greater impact rather than diverse, standalone projects.

## Migration industry

Research was conducted in six countries starting with Singapore, Bangladesh, and exploratory work in Ghana in Phase 2, extending to Ethiopia, Senegal, and South Africa in Phase 3. This has broken new ground in understanding the structures and functions of networks of smugglers and brokers involved in clandestine migration, and the implications for the welfare of migrants and their families. Existing literature on the migration industry in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia was particularly thin, though research had been conducted in the other locations. Migrating out of Poverty research has supported more holistic understanding by examining processes at origin, important transit points, and destinations, as opposed to destination dynamics (the focus of most existing literature).

Furthermore, Migrating out of Poverty has examined the co-constitution of exploitative circuits of labour recruitment, placement, and circulation, by brokers and smugglers, as well as other actors,



Ristanti is a return migrant from Singapore to Indonesia. She continues to receive book donations from Singapore, and looks forward to eventually having her own collection of Bahasa Indonesian books for the village children.  
Photo: © Bernice Wong, 2014

including government and migrants themselves. This challenged the idea that migrants are mainly victims with no agency in the process and that brokers and smugglers hold all the power. The research has generated interest in the allied fields of modern slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour which do not always overlap with migration research and policy advocacy. This resulted in a Department for International Development (DFID)/British Academy project on modern slavery in Ghana and Myanmar.<sup>1</sup>

## Gender and generation

The Gender and Generation theme explored transformations in conjugal and intergenerational relationships to better understand the dynamics of migrant households in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, and Zimbabwe. Often gender analysis in migration focuses on women and girls, and on the vulnerabilities they encounter. Fresh insights are revealed in *Migrating out of Poverty* case studies because of their focus on both women's and men's responses to poverty, changing global labour markets and, especially in Zimbabwe, economic crises.

The studies illuminate numerous connections between migration, social change, and gender dynamics; some demonstrating how social and economic change leads to new categories of migrants, others how migration gives rise to change with lasting effects. Additionally, the research examines intergenerational relationships, including parent-child and adult-elderly dynamics. Supplementary work on adolescent migration (co-financed by MOVIDA<sup>2</sup>) highlights inequalities in the ability to balance skills acquisition and work rooted in kinship, notions of gender-appropriate work, and residence.

## Income and remittances

The Income and Remittances theme has designed bespoke surveys of rural households in Ghana, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe to explore patterns of migration, and remittances and welfare outcomes. Using a baseline of households interviewed as long ago as 2013, *Migrating out of Poverty* carried out re-surveys in each country in 2018, creating unique longitudinal data that enable researchers to track movements of households in and out

<sup>1</sup> 'Brokered Migration for Domestic Work and Construction Work in Ghana and Myanmar: Examining the Relevance of the Slavery and Trafficking Discourse'.

<sup>2</sup> *Mobilités, Voyages, Innovations et Dynamiques dans les Afriques méditerranéenne et subsaharienne*.

of poverty by their migration status. These data sets are publicly accessible and are part of a very small number of longitudinal surveys available for Africa. Methodologically, analysing the impacts of migration on welfare outcomes is challenging but panel data allow researchers to address issues of reverse causality and selection bias. Migrating out

of Poverty has been able to analyse robustly the impacts of internal migration on welfare in Ghana, and the impact of return migration in Ethiopia, and how impacts vary across different types of household. Additionally, the data provide a rich picture of how migration and remittances are evolving over time.

## Key articles and working papers

### Migration industry

- 1 Tufa, F.A., Deshingkar, P. and Ayalew, T. (2019) ***Brokers, migrants and the state: Berri Kefach 'door openers' in Ethiopian clandestine migration to South Africa***. Migrating out of Poverty Working Paper 56. Brighton: School of Global Studies, University of Sussex.
- 2 Deshingkar, P. (2018) **'The making and unmaking of precarious, ideal subjects – Migration brokerage in the Global South'**, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(14), pp. 2638–54.

### Income and remittances

- 3 Teye, J.K. *et al.* (2019) ***The impact of migration on the welfare of households left behind in rural Ghana: A quasi-experimental impact evaluation***. Migrating out of Poverty

Working Paper 62. Brighton: School of Global Studies, University of Sussex.

- 4 Egger, E. and Litchfield, J. (2019) **'Following in their footsteps: an analysis of the impact of successive migration on rural household welfare in Ghana'**, *IZA Journal of Development and Migration* 9(1).

### Gender and generation

- 5 Khoo, C.Y. and Yeoh, B.S.A. (2017) **'Responsible adults-in-the-making: Intergenerational impact of parental migration on Indonesian young women's aspirational capacity'**, *Geoforum*, 85, pp. 280–89.
- 6 Khoo, C.Y., Platt, M. and Yeoh, B.S.A. (2017) **'Who migrates? Tracking gendered access to migration within households "in flux" across time'**, *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 15(3), pp. 326–43.

## Key events

### Migrating out of Poverty conferences

- **November 2012: Urbanisation & Rural-Urban Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa, Nairobi.** Hosted by the African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC), this landmark event highlighted emerging evidence that rural–urban migration had important benefits for poverty reduction that the dominant development and policy discourses of the time often overlooked.
- **March 2015: Gendered Dimensions of Migration: Material and social outcomes of South-South**

**Migration, Singapore.** Hosted by the Asia Research Institute (ARI), the conference moved the focus of debate on gender and migration beyond an exclusive 'women and girls' perspective to include analyses of masculinity and migration.

- **March 2017: Migrating Out of Poverty: From Evidence to Policy, London.** The flagship event for the programme drew from our research in a wide variety of settings to highlight the rich diversity and nuances of migrant experience, and caution against a binary representation of migrants in policy discourse.

# Policy impact

An important aspect of Migrating out of Poverty research has been a commitment to be responsive to regional policy priorities. Policy influence has taken different forms and the incorporation of our research findings and recommendations into policy and practice has varied according to the different needs and contexts in which we have worked. This section summarises some of our policy work across the countries we studied.



## Ghana

Ghana launched its first National Migration Policy (NMP) in April 2016. It was developed with key inputs and facilitation from Migrating out of Poverty's Ghana partner, the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS). Its aims were to promote a comprehensive and sustainable approach to migration management to enhance the potential of migration for Ghana's development, and to promote the benefits and minimise the costs of migration. The CMS remains the only academic organisation to sit on the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee where it continues to offer evidence-informed advice on implementation. Migrating out of Poverty research has shown that the regulatory framework governing labour recruitment and transnational migration remains weak and the CMS is working closely with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to address shortcomings. The CMS is also pushing for bilateral labour agreements which have the potential to address exploitation and abuse in the two migration corridors studied. Given the CMS' influence with government, Migrating out of Poverty expects these discussions to result in further shifts in policy in due course.



## Bangladesh

Migrating out of Poverty's Bangladesh partner, the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), contributed to influencing several aspects of government migration policy. They organised a national consultation meeting and

developed recommendations that were presented to Parliament in a bid to strengthen the draft Overseas Employment and Migrants Bill 2013.

Bangladesh's Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy passed into law in December 2015; it promoted the legal recognition of domestic service in Bangladesh, and its 16 provisions define clearly specified responsibilities for the employers, workers, and the government. The RMMRU was involved in campaigning on the issue and general awareness-raising in official circles. They also produced a case study about the drafting process which showed how elite coalitions between civil servants, bureaucrats, and employers led to delays in the recognition of the rights of domestic workers, and the adoption of protective policies.

The RMMRU also had concrete successes influencing two further elements of migration policy to improve conditions for Bangladeshi migrants: firstly, the agreement between the governments of Bangladesh and of Malaysia to permit private contracts for migrants, rather than the government-to-government regime that had ruled previously and largely eliminated migration; secondly, a Bangladesh government Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Saudi government to ensure that female migrants from Bangladesh have access to their mobile phones



## Indonesia

In 2014, the ARI convened an unprecedented joint meeting of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Ministry of Manpower, and academics to discuss concrete policy recommendations on the employment agents' industry and improving employment conditions for foreign domestic workers. In January 2016, the ARI met with representatives from the Ministry of Manpower's Employment Agency, Auditing and Licensing Branch to discuss the initial findings from surveys carried out in Indonesia, with special emphasis on how those findings affected the Ministry's role as regulator.



Many stallholders at Johannesburg's Yeoville market are migrants from other African countries.

Photo: © Mark Lewis, 2019



## South Africa

In 2013, Migrating out of Poverty partner, the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) produced analysis of the drafting of the Trafficking in Persons Act (2013), highlighting extensive reliance on myths and stereotypes about victims and perpetrators among the organisations working on trafficking. A focus on trafficking for sexual exploitation persisted due to international pressure, although local stakeholders knew about the greater importance of trafficking for labour exploitation within the country. In 2016, the ACMS team fed into the development of the new White Paper on International Migration. While the new policy appreciated the contribution of migration to development, it continued to marginalise low-skilled and informal workers and refugees in several ways. Most recently, the ACMS has been advising both the South African Local Government Association and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on regularising the migration of Zimbabwean women into the informal economy. However, it is not clear whether government will be responsive to research

in what is a highly politicised environment, with domestic conflicts around inequality and exclusion driving populism and xenophobia.



## Singapore

Migrating out of Poverty research in Singapore on the formulation and adoption of a regulation requiring that migrant domestic workers get a day off highlighted the role played by NGOs in keeping such an issue in the public eye. It identified the reasons that the policy was eventually adopted, including the government's desire to have Singapore be perceived as a country willing to adopt international guidelines on decent work, as well as maintaining its reputation as a desirable destination for domestic workers in the face of a decline in migrant numbers. This, along with two other case studies from South Africa and Bangladesh, helped to identify a number of common factors influencing how policy decisions are made in post-colonial contexts, and to advance our ability to understand, influence, and predict policymaking in contexts outside of Europe and North America.

# Lessons

Migrating out of Poverty has generated significant data and evidence of the role that migration plays in poverty over nearly ten years and 11 countries. But what are the lessons we can take from this body of work? We asked researchers from across the programme partners to summarise their key lessons, outlined in a selection of their responses below.

The full set of biographies is available on the [Migrating out of Poverty blog](#).

## Priya Deshingkar

Priya is Professor of Migration and Development at the School of Global Studies, University of Sussex. She has worked full-time with Migrating out of Poverty since the launch of the consortium in 2010. She was the Principal Investigator of Migrating out of Poverty from 2017 to 2019 and prior to that, the Research Director in charge of overall intellectual leadership and oversight. She led the Migration Industry theme and jointly conducted research on migration brokerage and smuggling, with partners in Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, Bangladesh, and Singapore.



“Working with Migrating out of Poverty has been my dream job. It gave me the opportunity to work with experts in African and Asian countries on the kinds of migration that matter to the poor. Together, we were able to work on unpacking the blackbox of migration among historically disadvantaged communities in marginalised regions through rigorous comparative research. It has been extremely rewarding to see Migrating out of Poverty having a real impact on policy change and building up a community of researchers with shared interests and capacities to study the links between migration, poverty, and development. I have worked with wonderful partners and built strong bonds of friendship and collaborative research which I will do my best to carry on beyond Migrating out of Poverty.”

## L. Alan Winters

L. Alan Winters is Professor of Economics in the University of Sussex and CEO of the Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium. He is also Director of the UK Trade Policy Observatory and a Research Fellow and former Programme Director of the Centre for Economic Policy Research in London. Previously, he was Chief Economist at DFID, and Director of the Development Research Group of the World Bank.



“It was a huge privilege and pleasure to be CEO of Migrating out of Poverty. As an economist, I had worked on migration a good deal, both in Sussex and the World Bank, and, while I knew intellectually that migration was multidimensional and multidisciplinary, the consortium proved it to me.

“As CEO, I didn’t get to work with many of our researchers directly, but I read and discussed nearly all our output, and was impressed by its breadth and depth. Having strong research teams and research leadership in each of our partners allowed us both to see migration in a broad canvas, and, through comparative work, to obtain insights that were not available to other groups. Similarly, combining qualitative and quantitative work provided a rich seam of evidence that we are still working through.

“Among the things I most appreciated was the way in which, by working with each other both within the consortium and within the Secretariat, we were able to achieve far more than we ever could have done as individuals or small groups. I really enjoyed our work on Policy Processes, in which three country studies came together to shed light on the chaotic and serendipitous process by which social science research can enter real policymaking, even in so contentious an area as migration.”

## Brenda SA Yeoh

Brenda worked with the Migrating out of Poverty programme for eight years, in her position as Research Leader of the Asian Migration Cluster at the Asia Research Institute (ARI). Brenda investigated a number of themes including remittances and livelihood strategies of Indonesian migrant women as domestic workers in Singapore, and policy dynamics and processes.



“I’m proud to have worked with an excellent team of young, emerging scholars in Singapore as well as international collaborators to extend existing research and tease out comparative approaches to migration and development in Asia and Africa. One of the most unique aspects of participating in Migrating out of Poverty has been the concerted effort to produce work that is not only timely and sound but also relevant to stakeholders beyond an academic audience, prompting us to reflect closely on the policy implications of our findings. Policy matters!”

## Loren Landau

Loren Landau is a Senior Researcher at the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, and was Director between 2006 to 2014 when the programme was in its early stages.



“The African Centre for Migration & Society at Wits University in Johannesburg was one of the founding members of the consortium. As an emerging research centre, this was an opportunity to partner with progressive scholars and institutions across the global South. In doing so, it offered a unique opportunity to shape research and policy agendas at multiple scales. By working through productive tensions, the consortium became stronger, the ACMS expanded its scope and ambitions, and I gained perspective and insight.

“Beyond generating empirical insights and knowledge, we helped lay foundations for ever more critical and constructive consideration of partnerships, in engagement, and in the politics of research beyond the wealthy West. Many now speak about South–South partnerships as the future of research. With Migrating out of Poverty we were able to forge and formalise those partnerships more than a decade ago.”

## Mariama Awumbila

Mariama has worked with the programme as Partner Director for the Ghana team, since the inception phase in 2009, at the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS), University of Ghana, Legon. As founding Director of the CMS, the Migrating out of Poverty project was one of the first major research collaborations that the CMS participated in after it was set up as a new centre.



“The collaboration provided us with the opportunity not only to work with a diverse range of leading migration scholars, particularly in the global South, but to work on several research strands that highlighted the specificities of migration experiences in the African context, increasing the visibility of the centre.

“The biggest lesson I take from the programme is to work closely with varied stakeholders, not only from the usual academic community, but also with diverse stakeholders such as policymakers, the media, and civil society. The research uptake component, which was a major focus, was especially novel for me and I would recommend this approach to most academic research. I am proud to have worked with a great team of researchers and scholars across the partnership to provide insights into previously little studied areas such as the migration industry in Ghana, but I am especially proud of the opportunity it gave us to contribute to migration policymaking in Ghana and at the ECOWAS [Economic Community of West African States] level. Through our work with the media, we have also helped to strengthen the capacity of media networks.”

## Julie Litchfield

Julie Litchfield led the quantitative work of Migrating out of Poverty for six years, working with partners in Singapore, Bangladesh, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe to understand patterns of migration and remittances, and the impact that migration has on household poverty. For the last three years, she led the Income and Remittances research theme, supporting partners to design and implement bespoke longitudinal surveys and to analyse the data focusing on the impacts of migration in three African countries.



“It has been an enormous privilege to work with partners across the Migrating out of Poverty consortium, both early career researchers and leading experts. I have learned a tremendous amount about the richness and diversity of migration experiences of households in the global South, and how these are shaped by local and regional policy, economic, and social contexts. The biggest lesson I have learned is how difficult policy dialogue is in the arena of migration. Misconceptions abound but the consortium has built strong relationships outside of academia. Together, we have been able to shed light on the complicated way migration affects households and also share our insights with policymakers and civil society in each country, as well as with international organisations.”

## Dorte Thorsen

Dorte has led the programme’s work on gender analysis and qualitative research for five years and headed the Gender and Generation research theme. She worked with partners across the consortium to integrate questions about gender dynamics into migration research, and to understand the impact of migration on family relations, empowerment, and equality issues in rural areas.

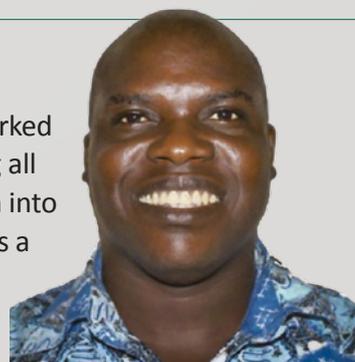


“I have truly appreciated working with long-time and new partners across the consortium, developing working relationships that thrived on the sharing of insights from all the research sites. For me, one of the biggest strengths in the consortium, and the one I have enjoyed the most, has been the intellectual leaps we have made in producing and analysing our data through continuous and sometimes challenging conversations. This is the grounding for bringing new insights to our constituents outside academia.

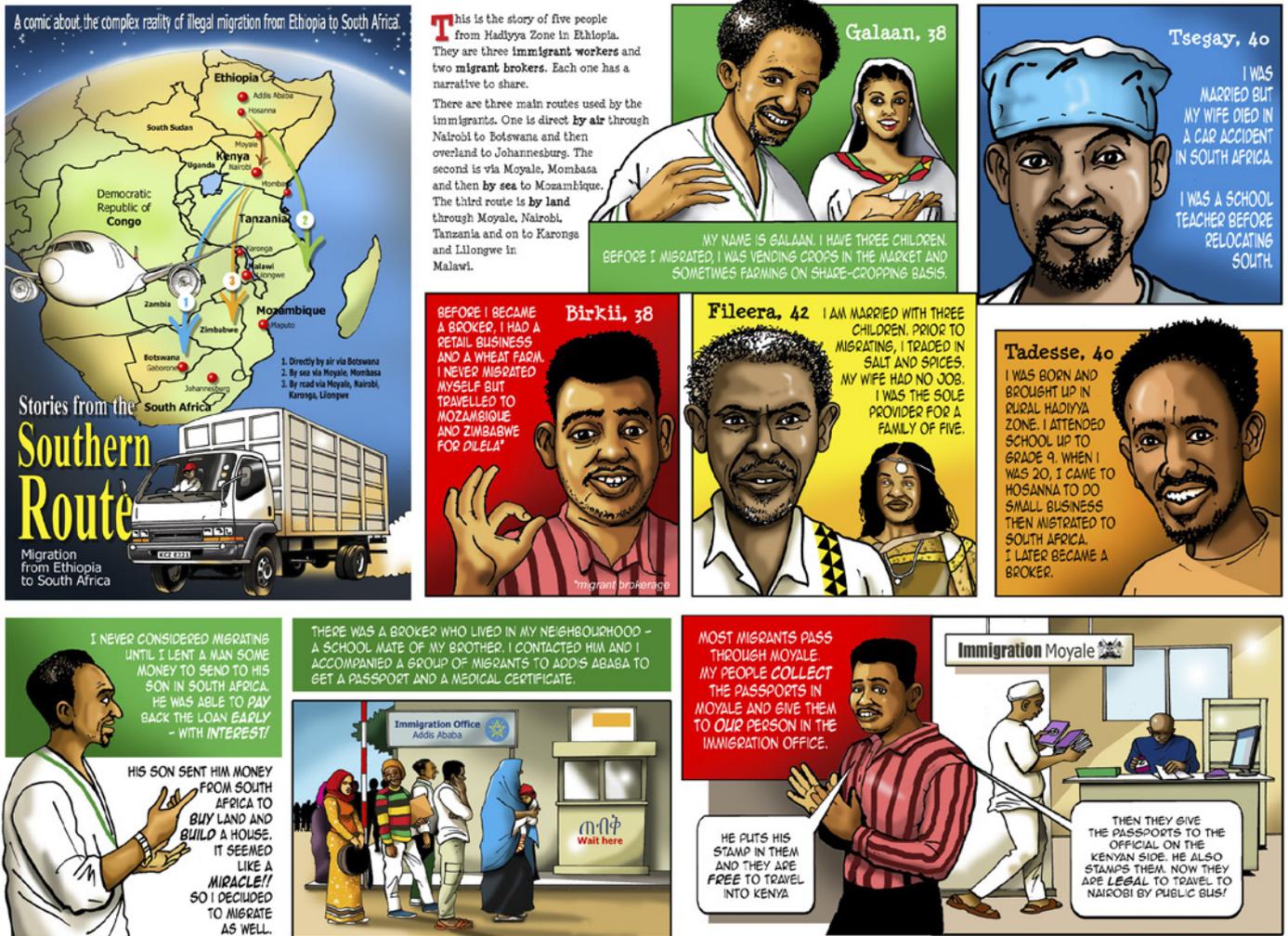
“Together, we have learned a lot about how people deal with absence, and sometimes loss, and about the diverse ways that remittances can change everyday lives and social positions, not only of migrants but also of the people back home. We are now sharing our findings with policymakers and civil society in each country, as well as with international organisations.”

## Joseph Kofi Teye

Joseph Kofi Teye from the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) in Ghana has worked with Migrating out of Poverty as a member of the Ghana research team during all three phases of the programme. He was the lead investigator of the ‘Migration into Cities’ and ‘Income and Remittances’ research projects. He also participated, as a researcher, in all the other research projects in Ghana.



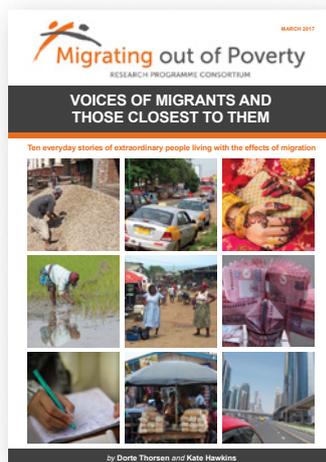
“Working with Migrating out of Poverty has enhanced my capacity to work with researchers from various academic backgrounds. Working on Migrating out of Poverty has also increased the visibility and research management capacity of the CMS. I am proud of the fact that the Migrating out of Poverty research outputs are being used to develop migration and development policies in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa.”



▲ Stories from the Southern Route – Ethiopia [PDF 4.17MB] © University of Sussex, School of Global Studies and Cartoon Movement, 2019

# Showing the human face of migration

As the global migration crisis has unfolded, the need to engage with public understanding and interest in migration became increasingly apparent to programme partners. Whilst public audiences were not primarily a target for the programme, a number of partners developed innovative methods to feed evidence from Migrating out of Poverty into the public conversation.

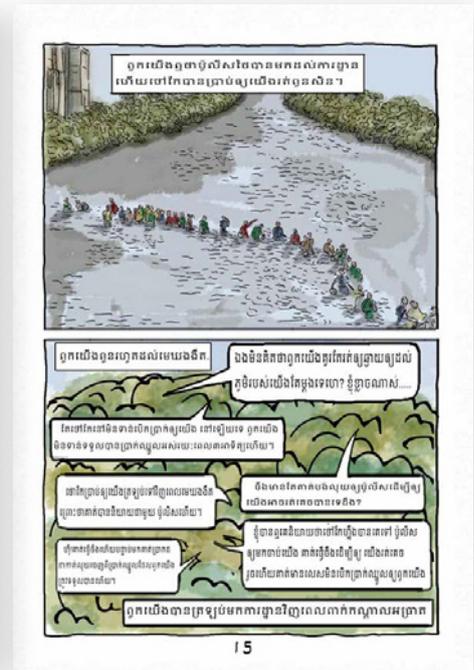


**Voices of Migrants and Those Closest to Them** (pictured left) was a small collection of written case studies drawn from our research to show how different migrants talk about their migratory journey – how it might have brought them resources and power, or involved continued stress and hustling – and also the stories of the family members who juggle the complex emotional and financial situations linked with migration.

The team at Sussex have also used graphic artists to produce a number of comic books that synthesise research transcripts into engaging stories, illuminating, for example, the voices of undocumented Cambodian migrants working in Thailand.

- ▶ Precarious Migration: Voices of Undocumented Cambodian Migrants
- ENGLISH version (7.6MB)
- THAI version (8MB)
- KHMER version (4.8MB)

© University of Sussex, School of Global Studies and Nicola Streeten, 2017



A photographic exhibition of images of Indonesian domestic workers was also exhibited at the ARI's annual Asia Trends symposium in Singapore and at the Congress of Indonesian Diaspora in Jakarta, where they were viewed by hundreds of attendees.

The Gendered Dimensions of Migration conference featured an exhibition of ACMS's method:visual:explore (MoVE) project 'Queer Crossings', exploring issues of migration, gender, health, sexualities, and sex workers in Johannesburg. The exhibition was also staged in Brighton town centre along with a seminar about the project at Sussex.

◀ A self-portrait from a body mapping and narrative writing project 'Queer Crossings'. Artist: © Pseudonym – Petunia, 2014

The ARI has employed a variety of visual methods to disseminate key messages to this audience. These have included the production of three short films which aimed to widen the discourse of labour migration to include discussion of its positive impacts and present policy recommendations to ensure that migration is safe and affordable. The films were:



Photo: © Bernice Wong

### **Ceria (2013)**

After ten years working as a domestic worker in Singapore, Rista is heading back to Indonesia with a dream.



Photo: © Bernice Wong

### **Gone Home (2013)**

A collection of stories of what happens back home in Bangladesh when construction workers return after long years working away in Singapore. Their tales reflect the uneasy tensions between sacrifice and longing, as well as meanings of the ‘good life’ in our age of mobility.



Photo: © Bernice Wong

### **Mimpi Anak Desa / Small Town, Big Dreams (2016)**

Miko and Nisa’s parents are labour migrants who have supported their dreams of becoming an entrepreneur and a nurse. This is the story of what happens when love — and remittances — trickle down to the next generation.

# Partnerships and strengthening capacity

Strengthening the shared knowledge and capacity of consortium members and building our collective capability to design and deliver academically rigorous and policy-relevant research, was always a key component of the programme. We are proud of the contribution Migrating out of Poverty has made to strengthening research capacity, and immensely proud of the talented young (and not so young) group of researchers that have grown with us

through the years, and who will go on to do amazing future work in the migration sector and beyond.

Towards the end of the programme, we asked some of the many researchers who have worked with us to reflect personally on how the programme had influenced them and shaped their careers. A small selection of their responses are given below.

The full set of biographies is available on the [Migrating out of Poverty blog](#).

## Fekadu Adugna

Fekadu is an assistant professor of Social Anthropology at Addis Ababa University, and researcher at the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA). Fekadu worked as principal investigator for the Migration Industry theme in Ethiopia.

“Participation in Migrating out of Poverty totally re-shaped my present and future research. I came from a totally different research focus, and now my research agenda is all on migration, forced displacement, and refugee studies.”



## Kellynn Wee

Kellynn is a Research Associate at the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore, and worked with Migrating out of Poverty from 2015 to 2017. During that time, she worked on conducting policy research and was also involved in communications and social media outreach.

“Working on Migrating out of Poverty gave me the rare opportunity to inhabit multiple universes at once: not only was I able to test my conceptual ideas in the domain of academia, I was able to see how these forms of knowledge translated into the worlds of advocacy and policy. The reminder that these realms are not separate, but that it takes conscious effort to cross and translate between them, will continue to shape my work.”



## Kudakwashe P. Vanyoro

Kuda started out working with Migrating out of Poverty back in 2014 as a Communications Intern with the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS). He is now Research Communications Officer and studying for a PhD. In his five years with the programme, he worked across almost all of the research themes.

“The internship programme for me was just the stepping stone I needed to get into migration studies. I am now pursuing my PhD and academic career in migration studies, which would have not been possible without this opportunity. My proudest moment has been producing evidence to engage policymakers in South Africa for many years to come.”



## Eva-Maria Egger

Eva was a doctoral student at Sussex who worked for Migrating out of Poverty during the period 2013 to 2017. She went on to be a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and, starting in September 2019, will take up a new position as a Research Fellow for the United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER).

“Migrating out of Poverty shaped my profile as researcher and helped me to find my post-doctoral research position. The exposure to other disciplines and researchers from developing countries provided me with a valuable experience outside of the normal doctoral studies. The topics of migration and poverty continue to be relevant and in high demand. My work with Migrating out of Poverty proved rewarding not only during my doctoral studies, but also for my career after that.”



## Emmanuel Quarshie

Emmanuel was Communications and Research Uptake Officer at the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) in Ghana from 2014 to 2019, during which time he completed a Master of Philosophy in Economics. He is now studying for a PhD in Economics with a research focus on migration, climate change, and wellbeing.

“Migrating out of Poverty has made me develop a keen interest in migration research. I am most proud of the opportunity I had to sit and dialogue with partners from other backgrounds in different countries without any form of discrimination and supremacy exerted. This meant a lot to me.”



## Anas Ansar

Anas was involved with Migrating out of Poverty between 2012 and 2016 as a Research and Communications Officer with the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU). He is now a Research Associate at the Bonn Centre for Dependency and Slavery Studies, and a PhD candidate at the Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn.

“Migration is a complex phenomenon that we often tend to oversimplify, focusing heavily on economic development (at origin) and securitisation (at destination). For me, Migrating out of Poverty’s research has created the scope to go beyond and avoid such over-simplification – seeing migration issues holistically with a strong emphasis on the perspective of the global South.”



## Allison Baldasere

Allison joined the Migrating out of Poverty team in 2013 as an Administrative Assistant and worked her way up to Programme Manager. Over the past six years, Allison has been involved in all aspects of the programme administration including finance, recruitment and outsourcing, communications, publications, and conference, meeting, and event planning.

“In the six years spent working with colleagues in the UK, Asia, and Africa, the biggest lesson for me has been in recognising that good working relationships can only be built over time, with face-to-face contact. Making time and budget available for periodic collaborative meetings, allowing partner staff from all countries to come together throughout the project’s lifetime, has helped improve the teamwork, broaden the scope of the analysis, and strengthened the resulting research and uptake activity.

“As this was the first experience of my career working within the academic/research sector, I have come to very much admire the work and goals of my Migrating out of Poverty colleagues and our Department for International Development Research and Evidence colleagues. I will take forward into my future roles the sense of inquiry and justice that I felt in working with these intelligent and sensitive people.”





'Gendered Dimensions of Migration', 30 June–2 July 2015 – hosted by Migrating out of Poverty partner institution, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

Photo: © Henry Kwan



West Africa migration workshop, 21–23 August 2019 – hosted by Migrating out of Poverty partner institution, Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana.

Photo: © Unusah Aziz



# Migrating out of Poverty

RESEARCH PROGRAMME CONSORTIUM

## Partners



## Website

[www.migratingoutofpoverty.org/](http://www.migratingoutofpoverty.org/)

## Key events

[www.migratingoutofpoverty.org/newsandevents/conferences/](http://www.migratingoutofpoverty.org/newsandevents/conferences/)

## Publications

[www.migratingoutofpoverty.org/publications](http://www.migratingoutofpoverty.org/publications)

## Blog

[migratingoutofpoverty.blogspot.com/](http://migratingoutofpoverty.blogspot.com/)

## Twitter

[twitter.com/MigrationRPC](https://twitter.com/MigrationRPC)

## Facebook

[www.facebook.com/migratingoutofpoverty](https://www.facebook.com/migratingoutofpoverty)

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