![Migrating out of Poverty — Research Programme Consortium logo]

South Africa Country Programme

Briefing Note

December 2014

What is the Issue?
The UNDP's 2009 Human Development Report estimates that 740 million people migrate internally and another 90 million migrate within developing country regions, often to improve development prospects for themselves and their families and due to lack of alternatives. Migration can contribute to improving the economic and social well-being of migrants and their families. However, it can also expose migrants to new vulnerabilities, such as debt and limited access to services. Political authorities and origin and destination communities often do not have effective policies in place to adequately manage migration.

While many governments in the Global South and international donors have become aware of the importance of migration for poverty reduction, they lack substantive evidence and data that can help them to maximise the benefits of migration and minimise its potential harms.

What is the Programme?
The [Migrating out of Poverty Research Progamme](#) Consortium is a seven year (2010-2017) multi-partner research programme with funds of £6.425m provided by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which aims to generate policy relevant evidence on the nature and extent of internal and regional (South-South) migration.

The Consortium is led by the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex, with partners based in five regions: in South Asia, the Bangladesh-based Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) at the University of Dhaka; in Southeast Asia, the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at the National University of Singapore; in West Africa, the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) at the University of Ghana; in East Africa, the African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC) in Nairobi; and in Southern Africa, the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

Each partner, under the guidance and support of the Consortium lead, is responsible for designing and conducting research projects that address the overall programme research questions. The projects consist of academic research, complemented by activities to ensure the communication of findings and influencing of migration policy and practice. For more information, please contact: <migrationrpc@sussex.ac.uk> or visit <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/>.

What the programme aims to achieve:
The research conducted by each partner is designed to address the following programme objectives:
- To understand why migration plays a significant role in poverty reduction in some places and contexts, but not in others
- To explore the transformational potential of migration on poverty
- To contribute to the generation of quality data on migration
- To have a strong policy focus
- To influence policy and practice through engagement with key stakeholders among policy makers, the media and civil society

Past and On-Going Activities in South Africa
The Consortium's Southern Africa partner, the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS), is concluding two research initiatives in South Africa.

1. Counting the Cost of Securitizing South Africa's Immigration Regime
This project aimed to improve the information employed in policy deliberations over international migration management. South Africa's reframing of migration as a security issue has led to heightened calls to strengthen border controls and enforce the policy through detention and deportation. Such approaches come with potential costs which include direct costs to South Africa's public purse and its regional reputation. Moreover, while protecting the labour market may create space for South African workers or elevate their wages, it may also result in increased labour costs, key skills gaps and decreases in regional remittances that can supress trade and investment.

Despite legal demands that the government conduct a financial impact analysis of any new policy approaches, there are no publicly available figures on South Africa's current expenditures on immigration enforcement and no estimates of the costs of new policy proposals to heighten immigration control. This research project is designed to estimate those costs. It has three primary goals:
- To the degree that current data allow, assess and summarise the *direct* costs of current immigration control mechanisms;
- To explicitly identify data gaps in currently available information;
- To develop a research model that identifies needed data and outlines a practical strategy for collecting information on current *direct* costs of policing migration (including *inter alia*, policing, detention, court costs, deportation, investment, trade, reputation) and means of estimating cost changes implied by current policy proposals.

A working paper based on this research is available online:
'Counting the Cost of Securitising South Africa's Immigration Regime': <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/documents/wp20-mthembu-salter-et-al-2014-counting-the-cost.pdf>

2. **Migration and Local Governance: Lessons and Findings from South Africa and Botswana**
Local authorities are often poorly equipped to address the needs of poor and transient residents. Through an examination of five South African municipalities and Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, this research project suggests that the region's cities are generally poorly equipped to deal with population mobility. In some instances this is due to generally poor capacity and political infighting which effectively stalls almost all pro-poor planning. Elsewhere, there are at least three critical factors working against effective responses: poor data and conceptual bias; institutional ambiguities and budgeting processes; and participatory planning. Many of these challenges stem from the lack of *de facto* decentralisation within formal government regimes and the continued primacy of party loyalty over local accountability. Consideration of these factors calls into question an academic and advocacy focus on national policy framework related to migration and development. Instead, it urges that we shift our attention to: (a) policies that may not be oriented towards migration, *per se*; and (b) that we refocus our attention at the local government level.

A working paper based on this research is now available online:
'Managing Migration in Southern Africa: Tools for Evaluating Local Government Responsiveness': <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/documents/wp19-blaser-landau-2014-managing-migration-in-southern-africa.pdf>

Future Activities in South Africa:
ACMS is in the process of finalising two research proposals to be conducted in South Africa from 2015.

1. Policy Formation: The 2013 Trafficking Act
In 2013 the South African government passed the Trafficking Act. The lead-up to the passing of this legislation saw great divisions among stakeholders about the motivations for the Act, its focus and its intentions. In its initial stages, this legislation moved faster through the policy making process than any other proposed law before it. Proponents of this legislation argued that it was essential to address the gendered exploitation that labour migrants to South Africa face and the looming World Cup seemed to provide additional motivation for the Act. Whilst it was initially argued that this Act would particularly protect sex workers, the scope soon widened to include other forms of gendered and exploitative work such as domestic work. However, this policy process stalled in 2010. This was in part due to mounting opposition from various researchers and NGOs, who argued that the Trafficking Act was not a solution to exploitative labour practices as had been claimed by those who supported the act, and that it in fact worked against addressing labour exploitation. Using policy analysis and process tracing as a methodology, this case study asks how it was that tackling trafficking came to be understood as a way to minimize exploitative working conditions migrants face and why trafficking was given precedence over other possible interventions. The objectives of the research will be to document the policy process leading to the Trafficking Act and to map out the key policy actors and mechanisms shaping the policy framework. The study will help identify key factors of policy change with a view to developing a more generalizable understanding of how policy change is accomplished in South Africa.

2. Perceptions of Migration's Effects on Destination Communities
This study will identify and describe the perceptions and concerns of business leaders, civil society, and officials regarding domestic and international migration. Its focus is on the perceived localised impacts on poverty in large and secondary cities. The ultimate goal is to assess where anti-(im)migrant sentiments are strongest and highlight myths or perceptions that may be countered by empirical research, public education or strategic advocacy. The project will outline respondents' perspectives on the following issues:

Aggregate impact on employment in entry level sectors - although unable to assess the actual impact, this research can identify the perceived effects and responses by considering the opinions and actions of employers, employer associations, unions or workers' rights associations, and local authorities;

Estimating job creation through labour flexibility, skills and entrepreneurialism balanced by the possibility of competition due to the emergence of 'ethnic niches' - this area of work would consider the extent to which migrants are presumed to replace the local poor in certain sectors or where they may contribute to labour flexibility and improved productivity. It will similarly assess the extent to which migrants are broadly associated with entrepreneurialism;

*Tax contributions versus resource outflows in the form of service delivery -i*n poor areas in which migrants represent a significant percentage of the population, remittance outflows may result in less local investment, a reduced multiplier effect and further degradation of infrastructure and social services. While some may see these resource flows as an opportunity to build translocal trade and investments, others are likely to see it as funnelling resources away from the local economy. Research in this area will focus on business leaders and local officials;

Effects on health and social cohesion - Interviews with police, service providers, and community leaders will reveal the degree to which migrants are held responsible for a variety of social maladies including crime, violence, disease, or 'moral degeneration.'

A similar study will be conducted in Kenya.

Other activities

1. Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC):

South Africa's wealth was built on migrant labour but current labour migration has profoundly changed. MiWORC was a project led by ACMS 2012-14 that aimed to understand the changes and their impact on the South African labour market and to provide evidence to improve the quality of discussions on labour migration between the European Union and South Africa.

The Migrating out of Poverty RPC provided some of the match funding for MiWORC. Other partners included the Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation at the University of Pretoria (GovINN- UP); the United Nations University (UNU); UNESCO; the ILO; and three South African government departments and agencies, the Department of Labour (DoL), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), and Statistics South Africa (Stats SA).

Migrating out of Poverty funded the following MiWORC publications, available at: <http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/where/southernafrica/miworc>

Budlender, D. (2013) MiWORC Report No.2 [PDF 1.37MB]. Improving the quality of available statistics on foreign labour in South Africa: Existing data sets. Johannesburg: African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand

Budlender, D. (2013) MiWORC Report No.3 [PDF 829.33KB]. Improving the quality of available statistics on foreign labour in South Africa: Strategic recommendations. Johannesburg: African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand.

Budlender, D. (2013) MiWORC Report No.4 [PDF 854.66KB]. Improving the quality of available statistics on foreign labour in South Africa: Suggestions for a Quarterly Labour Force Survey migration module and municipal level surveys. Johannesburg: African Centre for Migration & Society, University of the Witwatersrand.

For more information on the research conducted under MiWORC, please visit the project website: <http://www.miworc.org.za/>