

# MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT

## Position Paper

In the framework of the governance and peace working area strategy



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## 1. Introduction

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There are far more international migrants in the world today than ever previously recorded. The number has grown steadily over the last few decades and amounts to around 214 million in 2010 (IOM, World Migration Report 2010). International migration involves a wider diversity of ethnic and cultural groups as ever before, and also significantly more women are migrating today on their own (approx. 50%<sup>1</sup>). Regional or South-South migration has gained increasing importance with 40-60% of the migrants from developing countries residing in other developing countries<sup>2</sup>.

Traditionally being treated as separate policy portfolios, migration and development (M&D) are increasingly viewed through the prism of the many links that exist between these two fields. It is an ongoing debate if migration is beneficial to a country's development or detrimental. Large scale migration entails many changes at household, community and national level. A number of these impacts have been researched during the last years. In 2005, the report of the Global Commission on International Migration<sup>3</sup> has initiated a shift of paradigm in the debate: migration is no longer seen as only a security but also a development issue. Therefore, the focus of the debate is no longer primarily on how development efforts can stop or prevent migration, but on how migration can foster development. It is widely acknowledged that migration is a deliberate and often successful livelihood strategy to address poverty, although coupled with many challenges, risks and costs along the way. M&D considers migration as an integral part of development. In line with this, the discussion shifts away from the so far dominating migration management/control approach (i.e. border control, finding ways and means to decrease migration) and from a focus limited to short-term economic benefits and remittances. More holistically, the migrant-centred approach<sup>4</sup> combines economic with human and social development of the migrant and his/her family and looks at immediate positive and negative effects at an individual/household level. It promotes the idea that migrants and their families enjoy the complete array of human rights. Further research on how to better protect these rights and maximize the development potential of migration is however necessary. This should go in parallel with exploring the influence of migration on government policies. Migration should in this respect not be considered as an easy way out for governments not to fulfil their duties in developing their countries.

Over the next few decades, international migration is likely to transform in scale, reach and complexity, due to growing demographic disparities, the effects of environmental change, conflicts, new global political and economic dynamics, technological revolutions and social networks. These transformations will be associated with increasing opportunities – from economic growth and poverty reduction to social and cultural innovation. However, they will also exacerbate existing problems and generate new challenges – from irregular migration to protecting the human rights of migrants.

The opportunities and challenges of migration and development play a more and more prominent role on the agenda of various development actors. Due to the topic's growing importance – not only in international debates, but also in the project implementation – HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation included M&D in its thematic portfolio in July 2011. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation bases its engagement in M&D on its core competences such as skills development, social and economic development, governance and human rights. The focus is on regional and South South migration with an aim neither to encourage nor to hinder migration, but to contribute to the protection of the rights of the migrants, to minimise risks and costs, and to maximise its impact on local social and economic development.

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<sup>1</sup> UN Human Development Report 2009

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2011). Migration and Development. Commission Staff Working Paper. {COM(2011) 743 final}

<sup>3</sup> Global Commission on International Migration (2005). Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2011). See also Eunomad Reflection Paper on the migrant centred approach

<http://www.eunomad.org/images/MigrationDeveloppement-2011-Discussion-Paper.pdf>

## 2. Context

### Migration flows

Around 3% of the world’s population live outside their countries of birth (214 Mio. people, around 50% women), and the global trends indicate that the number of migrants will increase in the future. Internal migration (people moving within a country) is estimated to be almost four times as high, with around 740 Mio. internal migrants.<sup>5</sup> Although the MDG 1 on halving extreme poverty has been reached on a global level, development progress is decelerating, also because marginalised groups are often excluded. There is a risk that poverty rates will increase again in the coming years and that social exclusion becomes structural.<sup>6</sup> Current global development contributes to growing inequalities not only between countries but also within nations. These dynamics will contribute to further internal and international migration. The poorest are often forced into internal or cross border migration due to various reasons such as climate change or conflicts. The UN estimates that in 2050, around 200 Mio. people will be considered climate refugees. According to UNHCHR, the number of people forcibly uprooted by conflict and persecution stood at 42 Mio. in 2009, including 16 Mio. refugees and 26 Mio. internally displaced people (IDPs).

The main focus of the global discussions is still often on South-North migration. According to the UN however, only 37% of mobility takes place from developing to developed countries. The vast majority, 60%<sup>7</sup>, moves either between developing or between developed countries. A major reason why movement from developing to developed countries is comparatively small relates to the high costs. Undertaking short journeys is usually less costly. Nearly half of all migrants move within their region, as figure 1 displays. For example, intra-Asian migration amounts to almost 20% of all international migration and exceeds the sum of total movements Europe receives from all regions. Regional migration is also referred to as South-South migration, which in some ways is problematic. The term implies a clear definition on what is “North” and “South”. However, there is no universal definition, and different categorising concepts of major international organisations come to different conclusions<sup>8</sup>.

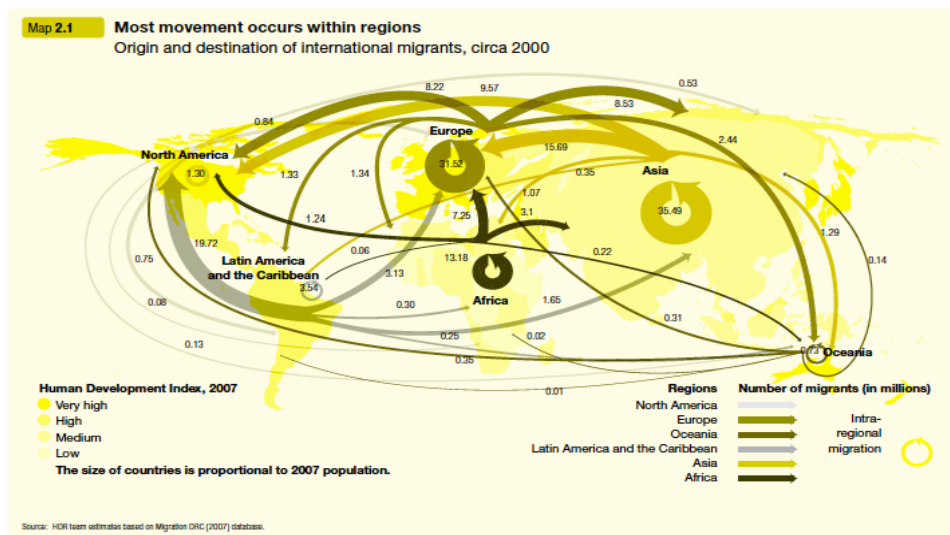


Figure 1: Migration Flows (Source: UNDP<sup>9</sup>)

<sup>5</sup> UN Human Development Report

<sup>6</sup> UN Human Development Report 2011

<sup>7</sup> The remaining 3% move from developed to developing countries.

<sup>8</sup> For more information see UNDP (2009). Human Development Research Paper 07/2009: South-South Migration and Human Development. Reflections from Africa [http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP\\_2009\\_07.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP_2009_07.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> UNDP (2009). Human Development Report 2009.

International labour migration usually requires a minimal level of economic capacities. The correlation between emigration rates and levels of employment resembles a “hump”, whereby emigration rates are lower in poor and rich countries and higher in countries with a moderate level of development.<sup>10</sup> Migration in search of work has increasingly become a livelihood strategy for both women and men because of the lack of opportunities for full employment and decent work in many developing countries. Migration patterns differ and depend strongly on the context, but are often circular in nature, meaning migrants are returning regularly. In many regions, such as Central Asia or Eastern Europe, migrants move in groups, often several times to the same location abroad, creating multilocal livelihoods.<sup>11</sup>

Labour migration has doubled in the last couple of decades and is expected to increase even more. The ILO estimates that in 2010 out of the 214 Mio. migrants, up to 90% were work-related. This estimation includes families of labour migrants as well as economically active refugees. Low and semi-skilled labour, and especially domestic work is increasingly in demand in the North and the South. According to ILO estimations, there are approx. 100 Mio. domestic migrant workers worldwide. Women are increasingly on the move (approx. 50%) and thus scholars observe a “feminisation of migration”.

### Drivers of migration

Many concrete push and pull factors are considered drivers of migration. Migrants are motivated by the quest for higher wages and better opportunities, responding to the demand for their skills abroad. Many others are forced to migrate because of famine, natural disasters, violent conflict, persecution or simply a lack of decent work in their home country. Growing numbers of people around the world are facing difficult choices as the environmental effects of climate change<sup>12</sup>, ranging from flooding to hurricanes, desertification and rising sea levels makes it even more challenging for poor people to remain in rural areas. Displacement related to the changing environmental conditions is not new, however the frequency and magnitude of the effects are likely to increase in the foreseeable future, leading many individuals with little choice other than to migrate for their own survival.

Furthermore a steep increase of semi-skilled labour is apparent on the demand side. The last two decades have seen a major transformation in the economies of nowadays middle income countries or even high-income countries, such as the Gulf States, Malaysia and Singapore. Rapid economic growth in the new industrialised countries corresponding to a better educated own labour force, have led to labour deficits in those countries. Similar to European States in the seventies, these countries have enacted policies favourable for temporary labour migration.

The following graphic summarises the main drivers of migration, including push and pull factors both from countries of origin and destination:

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<sup>10</sup> De Haas, H. (2007). Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective. COMCAD Working Papers. No. 29, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Thieme, S. and Barbora, S. (2009). Sustaining livelihoods in multilocal settings.

<sup>12</sup> For more information see Foresight (2011). Migration and Global Environmental Change: Future Challenges and Opportunities <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/foresight/docs/migration/11-1116-migration-and-global-environmental-change.pdf>

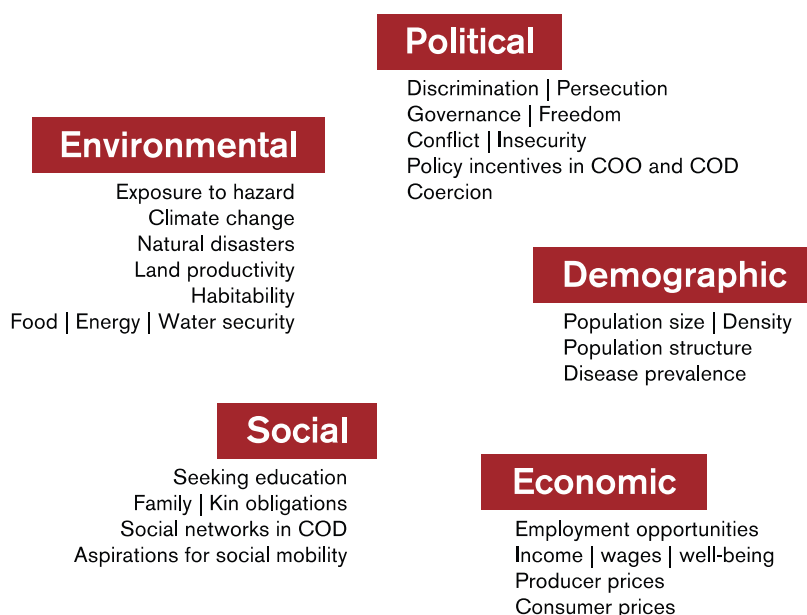


Figure 2: Drivers of migration

## Impacts of international labour migration

Although globalisation has liberalised the movement of goods, services and capital across borders in many ways, cross-border movement of people and labour remains much more restricted. While international migration can be a positive and economically successful experience for migrant workers, migrants and their families are exposed to numerous risks. Many suffer from poor working and living conditions, including low wages, unsafe working environments, a virtual absence of social protection, denial of freedom of association and workers' rights, discrimination and xenophobia. Many migrant workers, especially low-skilled workers, face exploitative working conditions and enjoy only limited protection, as well as no human and labour rights. The benefits of migration and thus the contribution to development depend on the degree to which migrants are protected and empowered by their home countries as well as the COD. Labour migration has the potential to serve as an engine of growth and development for all parties involved – destination countries, origin countries and migrant workers themselves. The benefits are not limited to financial remittances but also include so-called social remittances which materialise in transfers of information, skills, values, innovative ideas, etc. Whether benefits are maximised depends on a number of different factors including the forms of labour migration, the protection of their rights or the extent to which migrants are empowered to turn their migration experience into a positive one. Furthermore, it is crucial that countries introduce and implement policies to manage migration and that the COOs offer a favourable environment and structures to integrate the returning human, social and financial capital.

Remittances, the money sent back home by migrants, have a growing financial weight in COO. Globally, these remittances are around three times higher than Official Development Assistance (ODA), and have been growing steadily over the past decades. In 1995, workers' remittances to developing countries amounted to 85 Billion USD, in 2004 to 260 Billion and in 2011 to 372 Billion USD.<sup>13</sup> The importance of remittances will increase further in the future. The Worldbank estimates that in 2014, they will reach 467 Billion USD. The following graph compares the development of remittances, ODA and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and displays the increasing importance of remittances.

<sup>13</sup> World Bank (2012). Migration and Development Brief 18, April 2012

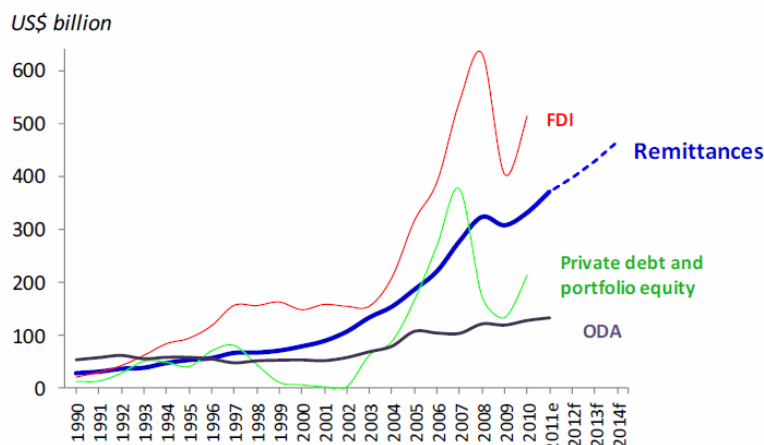


Figure 3: Remittances compared to other financial flows<sup>14</sup>

Disaggregating the overall quantity of remittances demonstrates that they also amount to a substantial share of GDPs of certain countries. A number of countries in South and Central Asia strongly depend on the remittances sent back.

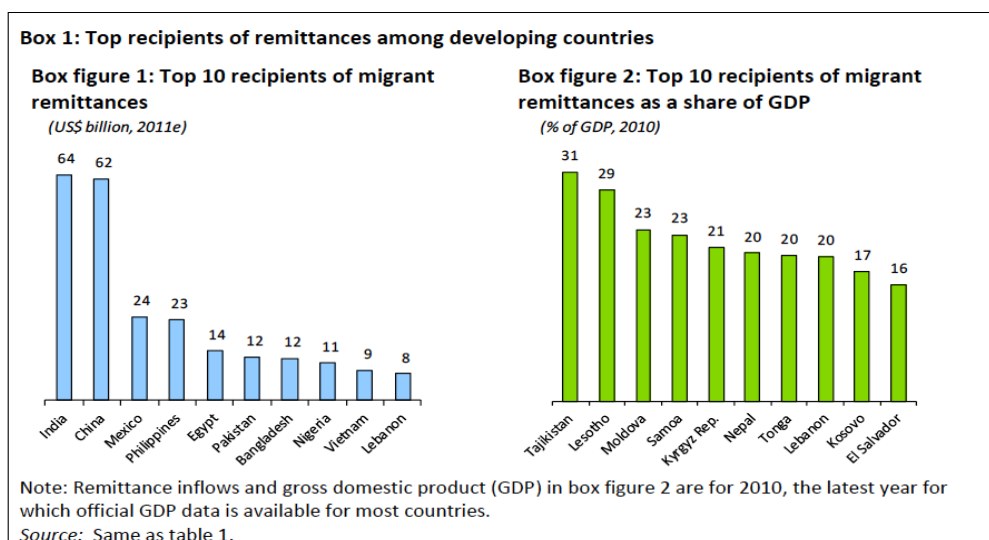


Figure 4: Top recipients of remittances<sup>15</sup>

## Legal Framework

Over the past decades, the international legal framework related to migration has developed significantly, starting from the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*. A quite comprehensive catalogue of legal international instruments<sup>16</sup> regulates migration, such as the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families* and since June 2011, domestic workers are protected under the *ILO Convention 189 Decent Work for Domestic Workers*. The latter recognises domestic work as an important and still to be regulated sector, and recalls that international labour conventions also apply to domestic workers. The *Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons especially Women and*

<sup>14</sup> World Bank (2012). Migration and Development Brief 18, April 2012

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> For a complete list of relevant migration and human rights instruments see Global Migration Group (2008). International Migration and Human Rights.

*Children* (adopted 2000), which supplements the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime*, includes a very comprehensive definition of trafficking: “Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation” (extract of Art. 3). This definition includes many exploited labour migrants, but is so far only limitedly translated into national legislations. As with many international legal instruments, ratification, implementation and sanctions remain limited. Neither receiving nor sending countries are so far strongly committed to the international legal framework.

### 3. Focus and key approaches

The mandate of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is to support impoverished and disadvantaged people and communities in developing and transitional countries who want to actively improve their living conditions. Our work is guided by a human rights based approach. The protection, promotion and execution of social, economic, political and cultural rights are at the centre of our projects and programmes. Through our interventions we support disadvantaged and vulnerable people to help themselves and assist them in sustainably improving their livelihoods. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation focuses on the most disadvantaged groups and the poor within five thematic working areas<sup>17</sup>. Although the so-called migration hump<sup>18</sup> suggests it is not the poorest who migrate for work, the migrants and their families bear a risk of high vulnerability and marginalisation. Various experiences gained in these working areas offer excellent entry points or close linkages to interventions related to M&D. Hence, the organisation will mainly concentrate its engagement in the sector of migration on projects which are closely linked to its thematic expertise. Based on arguments lined out in the previous section and the strategy of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, the organisation’s focus in the working field of M&D is on regional migration, such as in South Asia, Central Asia or West Africa. Regional migration has a strong notion of labour migration. Therefore, low and semi-skilled labour migration is another focus of the working field.

Though migration is a new theme for HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, it has valuable international experience with related fields such human trafficking or IDPs. In Vietnam, for example, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is implementing a project to reduce gender disparity and to improve women’s participation in decision making bodies to tackle – among other issues – women trafficking, which is a significant topic in the marginal Cao Bang region on the Chinese border. In Eastern Europe, a general project approach of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is to promote inter-ethnic dialogue and this implies also working on the inclusion of IDPs. In many countries and regions, migration has implicit and explicit effects on project implementation. The most prominent example is Nepal where many rural livelihood projects are affected by the (seasonal) absence of men, and where skills development projects, in the beginning, unintentionally skilled migrant workers. In order to address this, alternative implementation models such as farmer business schools for women left behind or trainings offered were adapted to the specific needs of migrant workers.

<sup>17</sup> Rural Economy, Governance and Peace, Water and Infrastructure, Environment and Climate, Skills Development and Education

<sup>18</sup> In the early stages of development, an increase in wealth tends to lead to a rise in migration, since a certain threshold of income is necessary to enable people to assume costs and risks of migrating. Only at later stages of development, emigration tends to decrease and countries tend to transform from net labour exporters to net labour importers. De Haas, H. (2007). Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective. COMCAD Working Papers. No. 29, 2007.



In its interventions, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation supports the link between migration and development and accepts migration as a viable livelihood option. We do not aim at promoting migration but work towards reducing its risks and costs, and maximise its benefits. Our efforts and interventions in the field of M&D contribute towards enhanced social and economic development in rural and semi-urban areas. In order to best maximise the benefits of migration and minimise its costs, our approach is to work along the migration cycle (see figure 3) and support the migrants and their families in all its stages. This allows for comprehensive interventions, taking into account the different vulnerabilities of migrants and their families. A key area is increased access to information so that an informed decision whether to migrate or not is taken. Pre-departure interventions, such as better preparing migrants by supporting them in developing basic skills or by increasing their knowledge on language, legal or cultural aspects of the COD, contribute to a more beneficial migration experience. At this stage, inclusion of the family left behind is a crucial aspect, in order to prepare them to shoulder the daily chores. This includes also securing a certain level of financial literacy to plan and budget (including savings) the anticipated incoming remittances. Decreasing remittances transfer costs and increasing the productive use of remittances are challenges to be addressed at the in-service stage. This also lays a basis for successful return and reintegration. However, there are various forms of returns: to the native rural areas, to urban centres or no return to the COO at all. The choices made by the majority of the migrants highly depend on the context. Labour migration nowadays has multiple localities and also increases rural-urban mobility and contributes to urbanisation.



Figure 5: Migration Cycle (own source)

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation also aims at influencing migration policies at national and international (mainly regional) levels so that the migration process is better governed. Where possible, it is ideal to choose an approach of working in the COO and the COD simultaneously. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is however not present in many COD. Some organisations working with migrants in destination countries could therefore be identified as potential partners. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation also actively participates in discussions and exchanges with the Swiss government and other Swiss or international organisations for instance in the context of international fora (e.g. the High-level Dialogue or the Global Forum for Migration and Development), in order to promote the migration and development approach in development policy.

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## 4. Intervention Areas

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Migration is a phenomenon that has implications on many sectors in development work and therefore needs a multi-disciplinary approach. The development impact of migration and mobility will be stronger if the migrant's social, financial, human and cultural capital is recognised and fostered, and if migrants are better protected. A migrant-centred approach strengthens the human and social dimensions, while not neglecting the economic perspective. Governance and human rights build the framework for a migrant-centred management of migration, as well as for the protection of migrants. Important links are to be made to skills development and rural economic development, which are key for a successful migration experience and productive investment of remittances. Additionally, a focus on psycho-social development aims at mitigating the far-reaching dynamics which migration triggers within families and communities.

The following graph illustrates the main areas of engagement in the working field of M&D:



Figure 6: Intervention areas of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in the field of M&D (own source)

Migration is not only a sector in itself, but a phenomenon that affects all development work. Therefore, looking at migration as a more cross-cutting topic or putting on a “migration lens” is crucial in regions where the numbers of migrants are high. The country programmes of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation can therefore choose to add migration as one of the cross-cutting principles.

### Human Rights and Protection

**Challenges:** Effectively managing and governing cross-border labour migration is challenging. Often not covered by national labour law, labour migrants are a particularly vulnerable population due to a number of factors. In cases of discrimination, unequal treatment and opportunities at work or abuse, migrants often cannot access legal redress. Despite a demonstrated demand for workers, numerous immigration barriers persist in destination countries. As a result, an increasing proportion of migrants are migrating through irregular channels. In order to better protect them, the international community has adopted several legal instruments as outlined above. Despite well-developed international standards to protect migrants, their rights as workers and human beings are too often undermined, especially if their status is irregular. Furthermore, many countries have so far not ratified the conventions.

Comprehensive and up-to-date labour migration policies are the basis for good migration governance. But it is not sufficient to have sound immigration and emigration policies. In- and out-migration affects many other policy fields where it must be addressed and included in a coherent way. Policy coherence in migration implies including the relevant institutions and processes regulating migration, development, economics, labour, civil law (contract law) and human rights. It requires coordination among ministries and integration of migration into sector policies. A coherent and transparent policy framework leads to a true win-win-win situation for migrants, COO and COD. In the Gulf Cooperation Countries for example, the Kafala system / visa sponsorship persists, where visas are tied to the employer. This implies that the workers cannot change employer and completely depends on his/her goodwill.

Challenges in migration governance not only arise in the COD. Also the COO can influence the degree of vulnerability of its emigrants. Migrants, who lack comprehensive information about migration procedures, their rights before departure, during their stay abroad, and upon returning to their COO, do not have the capacities to act adequately in case of any difficulty or abuse.

**Possible interventions:** Applying good governance principles (participation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness & efficiency, equity & inclusiveness and rule of law) along the migration cycle contributes to the empowerment of migrants. Furthermore, a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to global and local migration governance is needed to protect the rights of all migrants and their families. Working with duty-bearers to comply with their obligations is crucial. Advocacy for establishing a comprehensive migration and development policy or for the implementation of an existing policy framework has to be increased by local actors. Awareness raising on international law and the corresponding obligations for COO and COD helps identifying their responsibilities. Developing capacities of local governments for fulfilling their administrative and legislative tasks is at the same time important. Accountability between different actors playing a role in the migration chain needs special attention. Many players – in COO and COD – are involved in placing workers, and accountability mechanisms among them, but especially to the migrants themselves, are oftentimes inexistent and need to be strengthened. In line with the multi-stakeholder approach, it is not sufficient to work with the government only. The private sector which comprises formally registered recruitment agencies and informal sub-agents/brokers has to be called on to act in a responsible way. The private sector plays the crucial link between the migrants and their employers, but their dealings are often not professional. Thus, developing the professionalism of the private sector, particularly the recruiting agencies, is vital to protect the rights of the migrant workers. Similarly the role of the local civil society cannot be undermined. The civil society has to actively engage in advocacy and lobbying for safe migration. Supporting local civil society in engaging actively in advocacy and lobbying for safe migration is crucial.

On the other hand, migrants themselves need to be empowered to know, claim and access their rights – in their home country as well as abroad. Through human rights education, awareness on their legal entitlements needs to be promoted. Importantly, in migration not only human rights are essential, but at the same time labour and migrants' rights (e.g. contract law). Fostering confidence, skills and resources of the migrants would support them in communicating with duty-bearers and in advocating for their rights.

Access to information primarily before migrating, but also for in-service migrants, is crucial for successful migration. Oftentimes, decisions to migrate are taken in an uninformed way, including the issue of choosing a recruiting agency or sub-agent, necessary payments, contract conditions, etc. Since aspirant migrants often lack information on the adequate level of financial costs of migration, migrants might already at home become victims of exploitation from recruitment agencies. Additionally, the quality of the pre-departure preparation trainings for migrants is also mostly rather poor; people basically leave their home country unprepared for the challenges of a life in a completely different country (i.e. not knowing their rights or what measures to take in case of violation of their contract, health including HIV/AIDS, etc.). Poor working and living conditions of the migrants in the COD result to a great extent from lacking knowledge and limited preparation for

migration. Once abroad, the migrants – and especially domestic workers – yet have less access to information or any sort of legal or psycho-social support.

Access to information empowers people to take the right decisions and to feel more self-confident. Hence it is crucial at all stages of the migration cycle for successful migration, but especially at the initial stages before decision making and before departure. This includes information on the financial and social costs of migration, on the process of migration, on basics about customs and culture of the COD, how to react to abuse, how to keep contact with their own family, whom to contact in case of difficulties in the COD, how to remit money safely, etc.

Another topic which has to be addressed under migration governance is human trafficking. Its scope goes farther than the commercial sex trade. In terms of labour migration, it is often the nature and conditions of work in the COD that defines the cases as trafficking. Labour exploitation can take a range of forms such as debt bondage, low wages, excessive working hours, unsafe conditions, no wages (slavery), forced into prostitution, etc. In many cases, the migrant does not see him/herself as a victim, since s/he still feels better off than in the home country. Children on the move, trafficked or not, are especially vulnerable. In all cases, it is often hard to tell where trafficking begins and ends. The *United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime* and its Protocols, especially the *Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish the Trafficking in Persons* provides the following definition:

“Trafficking in persons’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs” (Article 3).

When channels for safe and legal migration are limited, and visa regulations become increasingly restrictive, private actors such as recruiting agencies or other employers may take advantage of this predicament, and lure potential migrants into exploitative employment. The movement of people for the purpose of forced labour (including non-payment of salaries) and services usually involves trafficking in persons. Therefore, one often finds a direct correlation between forced labour and human trafficking.

## **Economic Development**

**Challenges:** There is an international consensus that migrants’ financial remittances are the most tangible benefits of migration to developing countries. They often contribute to significant shares of the GDP. In Bangladesh as well as in Sri Lanka for example, remittances overtop the garment industry as foreign exchange earner. Remittances are private money and should not be appropriated by the state. Undoubtedly, remittances have a huge impact on improving livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. Migrant remittances are mostly spent for consumption or invested in improved housing, nutrition, schooling and health care, thus directly improving the livelihood situation. Thereby, they boost the local economy and create multiplier effects. Furthermore, remittances contribute to creating human capital by financing education of children and health for all age groups as well as improving food security for poor households. On the other hand, a huge inflow of remittances takes off some pressure on the government to implement necessary and often long overdue social and economical reforms.

The initially challenging and costly technical part of transferring remittances from one country to another has become increasingly simple and transfer costs have reduced substantially. Nevertheless, informal actors (bus drivers, family networks, etc.) and costly Money Transfer Operators such as Western Union are still widely used, due to lacking knowledge or convenience

reasons.<sup>19</sup> At present, remittances are often not being used to tackle one of the root causes of migration: the poor rural economy. Many households use the injection of income for immediate and short-term improvements in consumption, household asset accumulation as well as meeting life-cycle obligations. On the other hand they often remain vulnerable and may fall back into poverty since the remittance brought in is not planned and invested in a sustainable manner, due to lack of knowledge, awareness or options. Investing remittances productively is a challenge for many migrants. If longer term investments are lacking, reintegration becomes more difficult. And in spite of its importance, return and reintegration (incl. the decision not to return) have not been given enough weight, also in terms of researching and better understanding these patterns. Many countries of origin are not prepared enough for sustainable reintegration of their returning labour migrants. Nevertheless, many countries are now setting up special units to deliver services for returning migrants and programmes for reintegration into professional life, such as counselling, vocational training, job-placement assistance, access to credit schemes or entrepreneurship support. Successful reintegration should also build on skills acquired during migration (for further elaboration on this see the following chapter).

**Possible interventions:** The basic idea that has to guide a remittances management component is that remittances are private money and the decision on how to use / invest it should solely be taken by the migrant and his/her family. Any project can only support families on how to achieve the goals they have set for themselves and for which they have sacrificed a lot. Main interventions are on pre-departure cost-benefit analysis, access to loans (linking with existing banks or micro-credit institutions), budgeting and planning skills, saving culture, access to safe savings accounts, and awareness raising about the importance of productive remittances' investment.

Migrants and their families often lack basic financial skills which negatively impact already on the decision making whether to migrate or not. Financial literacy means that the family would be able to discuss and plan financial aspects, and set goals for a successful migration, ideally before the migrant leaves. This means that the people need to acquire the necessary *knowledge, skills* and *attitudes* for good financial management. However, it needs a different set of knowledge and behaviour for increasing trust in banks and create a culture of saving. Literature and experiences<sup>20</sup> suggest that mere information campaigns are not sufficient to reach a behavioural change, but opportunities and close accompaniment to practice acquired knowledge and eventually change. The aim is to transform reactive into proactive behaviour which anticipates risks and adequate coping strategies.

As concern the question of transferring money, and taking into account the speed of the development of communication technologies, remitting money via mobile phone has become a reality in many countries, especially in Africa. Furthermore, banks have opened branch offices in rural areas and hence allow the recipients to receive money even in comparatively remote places. Migrants and their families are thus supported to increasingly use formal and cheap channels to remit money.

With regard to making the best use of remittances, there is a consensus that sound macroeconomic policies, political stability and improvements in the investment climate in COO are prerequisites. Further, better saving and investment option should be provided to migrants and their families. In addition, migrants and their families are supported on how to use remittances for sustainable development, according to their specific personal needs and interest. An example is to provide small-scale business trainings (incl. agricultural investments) for entrepreneurs among the migrant returnees and family members left behind. As not everybody is an entrepreneur, a careful selection process according to specific criteria is needed. Before starting the business, a thorough market

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<sup>19</sup> Intercooperation together with SDC has published an article on Remittances in 2004, along with a corresponding presentation. These documents can be found on <http://www.intercooperation.ch/finance/themes/2004/remittances-migrants-german.pdf> and [http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource\\_en\\_25052.pdf](http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_25052.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> SDC Income and Employment Network [http://www.sdc-employment-income.ch/en/Home/Financial\\_Sector/Savings\\_Credit\\_Forum/Do\\_Financial\\_Literacy\\_Skills\\_Empower\\_the\\_Poor](http://www.sdc-employment-income.ch/en/Home/Financial_Sector/Savings_Credit_Forum/Do_Financial_Literacy_Skills_Empower_the_Poor)

analysis (including banks and micro-finance institutions) will clarify which products and trade do have financial potential.

Regional labour migration is often circular, and therefore, reintegration of migrants is a crucial issue. Circular migration means that workers are moving back and forth between countries of origin and destination. Hence migrants return to their COO with enhanced knowledge, additional skills, new cultural and social experiences, and additional financial means. Thus, the human capital of the COO increases substantially, and the more pessimistic views of “brain drain” turns – at least partly – into a “brain gain”. In order to achieve this, migrants must have easy access to the resources they need both for consumption and investment. Such interventions could lead to breaking the migration cycle – although this is not an objective in itself. On the other hand, not all migrants aim at returning to their home countries. Therefore, livelihoods are increasingly becoming multi-local: people living at different places are contributing to sustain the family’s livelihood.

### **Skills development**

**Challenges:** The majority of regional migration is so-called “unskilled”<sup>21</sup> or semi-skilled migration. Men and women leave their homes bound for work in child care, domestic work, construction, cleaning, etc. in the best case with a short crash-course about basic knowledge and skills. Domestic workers for example are in many cases not even familiar with the basic modern “Western” domestic appliances they are supposed to handle, or construction workers have never set foot on a construction site before. Such situations and the corresponding low self-esteem leave them even more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Pre-departure trainings are offered by private and governmental agencies, mainly in Asian countries, and often include some basic skills training, especially for domestic workers. However, the quality is often limited.

**Possible interventions:** Experience has shown that even basic capacities and skills lead to a higher self-confidence and thereby to less abuse. Furthermore, if the migrant workers already attended basic training in their COO, they can usually claim initial salaries which are considerably higher<sup>22</sup>. Hence, it is worth investing in skilling aspirant migrants. Therefore, specifically designed trainings according to the labour needs of COD provide migrants with the necessary skills. Such trainings can also be complemented by more in-depth pre-departure information on issues such as working conditions, language or culture. Project experience has demonstrated that vocational skills programmes have trained aspirant migrants without being aware of. In Nepal for example, potential migrants were unintentionally included in the project, but were afterwards able to claim a higher salary in the COD. Therefore, a migration lens for existing education and skills development projects in migration prone areas helps to identify potentials to meet specific needs of migrants. This opens opportunities for further empowering migrants and decreasing their vulnerability, such as through additional pre-departure trainings.

Skilling programmes always consider the importance of the trained skill in the COO. The skills of migrants should also be useful for the COO so that once s/he returns, s/he can work with her increased skills in the local job market and contribute to the development of the home country. Migrants are often perceived as ‘change agents’ because they do have the potential to introduce new business skills, market opportunities or take over responsibilities in their home communities. Working with those change agents is crucial for reintegration and sustainable development.

### **Psycho-social Development**

**Challenges:** The rising number of women involved in all migration streams has led to the coining of the term “feminisation of migration”. According to the IOM, 49% of all migrants are women, with a tendency to rise. Whereas in the past most women migrated as family members, an increasing number are now migrating independently from male and family relatives. Some economic sectors

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<sup>21</sup> The term unskilled should be avoided since everyone has some skills.

<sup>22</sup> Evidence from own project experience, as well as confirmed by Adhikari J. & Hobley M. (2011). Everyone is leaving – who will sow our fields? The effects from migration of Khotang District to the Gulf and Malaysia. [http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/nepal/ressources/resource\\_en\\_211141.pdf](http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/nepal/ressources/resource_en_211141.pdf)

attract more female workers (e.g. domestic work, garment industry, nursing), while others tend to draw more male workers (e.g. construction). Thus, gendered labour demands influence who will migrate and under what conditions. Migration often entails different degrees of vulnerability and risks of abuse for men and women. Women are usually more vulnerable when employed as domestic workers, as this work takes place within the private sphere of a household away from public scrutiny and social contacts. Furthermore, domestic workers are in many countries not covered by the Labour Law. Additionally, women domestic migrant workers face a relatively high risk of sexual exploitation compared to others.

Already in the pre-migration phase, women face disadvantages compared to men. Within households, community structures and in the public sphere, men and women often have unequal access to information on migration, employment, financial and social services, and integration or reintegration assistance, thus increasing their vulnerability. Every exploitation - physical, labour or sexual – has deep psychosocial impacts.

Migration leads to cultural changes, shifting gender roles and family structures. If husbands migrate, women are left behind charged with additional tasks in agriculture, and often more vulnerable. In some cases, they reach a new freedom and have more power in decision-making leading to their empowerment. However, long distance relations put pressure on a marriage, making absentee husbands more suspicious of their wives' loyalty. In other cases, however, the powers are shifted and the wives are under the supervision of their parents-in-law. In cases of female migration, husbands stay back, confronted with a new role in the household. Women's new status as main income provider affects gender relations within a family's everyday life and on the concept of masculinity for the husbands and society at large. Overburdened husbands who are not able to cope with the new situation are also prone to squander remittances. Furthermore, it is often difficult for husbands to cope with the new independence of their wives, and might lead to increased domestic violence. In any case, children are especially affected and thus need special consideration and protection. When the husband migrates, it directly affects the time that a mother can allocate to her children. Another problematic issue in many contexts is the absence of the active population in rural areas, when both parents migrate. Elderly and children are left behind and are supposed to shoulder all chores.

**Possible interventions:** Understanding the possible social costs of migration and preparing beforehand is very important to reduce such costs. Before migrating, the decision to leave and the organisation of economic activities, household chores and childcare place psycho-social stress on the migrant and his/her family. However, in order to prevent related problems as far as possible, so called familial management structures<sup>23</sup> could support them in taking decisions on which family member will be responsible for certain chores such as child care, farming, care of the elderly, etc. once the wife or the husband is abroad. Despite preventive measures, families left behind may face issues such as addiction problems, protection related issues of the children and violation of child rights.

The migrant himself / herself is also vulnerable to exploitation and abuse during migration which might traumatize the migrant even after his/her return. Therefore, in many cases it is necessary to provide either individual counselling or psycho-education community programmes which raise awareness and discuss the following issues related to migration: management of adolescent behaviour, dealing with small children's reaction to the absence of a parent; interaction with older caregivers on how to manage the children/the care responsibilities, care of old persons, etc.

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<sup>23</sup> Transfer of the roles and responsibilities of the migrant, discussion at family level on ways to deal with potential problems, planning and budgeting, etc.

### Implementation of M&D projects

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation initiated its work on migration and development by implementing two SDC mandates in the areas of safe migration / labour migration management in Sri Lanka and Nepal. Both projects were piloted for 2 years and have now been extended for 3-4 year phases. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and SDC are jointly gaining operational experience in the areas of safe migration, labour migration management and migration and development and aim at increasing their institutional and technical knowledge through these projects.

The goal of the two projects is to improve the protection and well-being of labour migrants and their families in Sri Lanka and Nepal. The projects aim at reducing the social, psychosocial and economic costs of migration and increasing the benefits of migration through skills development, access to justice and remittances management. The projects focus on improving pre-departure preparation of migrants and on supporting those who have been victims in the course of the migration process.

Further, the projects aim at influencing the national labour migration policies and promote decent employment opportunities for migrants by strengthening processes of migration governance. In addition the project work towards the empowerment of labour migrants and their families through civil society actors by developing the migrants' awareness of the mechanisms of the migration process and of their rights as well as by providing legal services, psychosocial support and economic capacity building. Additionally, the projects support local civil society organisations in advocating at national and international level for decent work and coherent migration policies.

## 5. Future Perspectives

HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation aims to gradually increase its engagement in the working field of migration and development over the coming years and along the intervention areas described above. In 2015, the project experiences, the potential and challenges of the working field will be evaluated. Based on this, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation will decide on and shape its future positioning on M&D.

So far, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation has not yet investigated the possibility of working with the diaspora and migrant's associations. They however play an important role in developing their home countries and could serve as good entry points for M&D programmes. The organization will further explore the option of working closely with diaspora organizations, potentially even as programme partners.

**Geographic focus:** Currently, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation implements two projects (see boxes) in the working field of M&D in South Asia (Sri Lanka and Nepal), which are mandated by SDC. In the coming years, the project portfolio will be complemented through engagements in other regions. Regional migration is also particularly relevant in West Africa or Central Asia and the country programmes have indicated their interest to work in greater depth on the topic. Ideally, a joint COO and COD approach should be promoted and will imply working with partner organisations active in the COD(s).

**Financial perspectives:** The growing importance of migration and development has been recognised by several donors. SDC has launched its Global Programme on Migration and Development with a focus on the topics of labour migration, diaspora, refugees and IDPs, human trafficking, and national and international migration dialogue. SECO has also recently included migration in its global programmes. The European Commission runs a "Thematic Programme of Cooperation with Third Countries in the Area of Migration and Asylum", which launched its third call for proposals in 2011 and which is to be repeated annually. DFID finances a seven-year (2010-2017)



research programme consortium “Migrating out of Poverty”. The Soros Open Society Foundation has placed migration as one of its core topics in its yearly calls for Central Asia in 2012 and 2013. Finally, GIZ is more active in the field of remittances management and diaspora. The goal of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is to implement at least 3 sector projects in migration until 2015.

**Networks and Partnerships:** Currently, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is engaged as a member of the core group in the SDC Network Migration, as well as in the informal Swiss Civil Society Network on Migration & Development. Further, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation will actively contribute to KNOMAD, the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development. Moreover, the two local offices of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation in Nepal and Sri Lanka have become partners of the Migrant Forum Asia (MFA). Further networks collaboration opportunities will be explored, with an initial focus on regional networks and then moving more global.

Since HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is mainly working in COO, the areas of intervention are geographically limited. It is therefore all the more important to build networks and liaise with potential partners in the destination countries. Establishing partnerships with organisations working in COD is crucial in order to implement an approach that can support migrants in both COO and COD. HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation will work based on a multi-stakeholder approach with local civil society organisations; with local governments/ institutions, and the private sector. As mentioned above, at the Swiss level, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation will also explore opportunities and possible synergies of working and liaising with diaspora organisations.