



Internal Migration Eye - IMigE

Vol 1 Issue 3

In this issue

New Research

Working paper 14: Internal and Regional Migration for Construction Work: A Research Agenda;

Working Paper 17: Poverty, Youth and Rural-Urban Migration in Ethiopia.

All Working Papers are available online at the [Migrating out of Poverty website](#).

New Policy Briefs

Internal Migrant workers and the Construction Sector in Bangladesh: Tackling informality and exploitative labour practices;
Internal migrant construction workers in Nepal: Tackling exploitative labour practices to enhance migration's impact on poverty reduction;
Impact of labour migration to the construction sector on poverty: Evidence from India.

All Policy Briefs are available online at the [Migrating out of Poverty website](#).

Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of Internal Migration Eye - IMigE - the newsletter of the Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium.

Who we are
Migrating out of Poverty is a DFID-funded consortium of six research institutes based in Africa, Asia and Europe working together to conduct research on the links between migration and poverty. Our research aims to deepen the understanding of migration within and between developing countries in order to better equip migrants, organisations supporting them, and policy makers, with evidence to inform their efforts to reduce poverty.

Key Contents

This quarter we highlight our findings on one of our focus sectors: the construction industry. The Migrating out of Poverty Consortium selected this as an area of focus - along with domestic work - to allow cross-country comparisons. The ILO has estimated that the construction sector employs nearly 110 million people worldwide. The industry exists in every country and provides an accessible employment option for large numbers of poor migrants as it requires few skills, and in a non-mechanised context the majority of tasks are manual. In some of the contexts we are looking at, some of the construction labourers are women. At the same time, construction work is dangerous and many workers are employed without formal contracts or social protection. In the 'Migrating out of Poverty New Research' section Benjamin Zeitlyn and Priya Deshingkar from Sussex [review the literature on internal and regional migration for construction work globally](#) and identify a research agenda; construction work is one of the options for [rural-urban migrants in Ethiopia](#), examined by Atnafu, Oucho and Zeitlyn. New Policy Briefs published by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) highlight the conditions migrant construction workers endure in [Bangladesh, Nepal and India](#). In our [Other](#)

Research in the News

RMMRU's [policy dialogue on Labour Attaches' role in protecting female migrants](#)

Other Activities

ARI Migration and Construction Work in Asia [symposium](#);
RMMRU [policy dialogue](#) - Labour attachés: the protectors of female migrants in the Middle East;
ACMS Migrating for Work Consortium [closing events](#).

A Good Read

Miserable migrants? Natural experiment evidence on international migration and objective and subjective well-being

Our Blogs

Benjamin Zeitlyn looks at [female migrant construction workers](#);
Kuda Vanyoro considers the 'Art' of [Migration] [research communication](#);
Eva Maria Egger argues that we need to look at the poverty reducing potential of [migration from the big cities into smaller towns](#);
Priya Deshingkar argues that [dirty jobs can help migrant domestic workers achieve a brighter future](#).

[Activities](#) section the [trailer for ARI's new documentary](#) about Bangladeshi migrant construction workers returned from Singapore can be downloaded and viewed.

Feedback

If you have any comments about this edition, or about the newsletter in general, please contact [Angela Haynes](#), Migrating out of Poverty's Research Uptake Manager.

New Migrating out of Poverty Research

WP 14 Internal and Regional Migration for Construction Work: A Research Agenda By **Benjamin Zeitlyn and Priya Deshingkar with Bridget Holtom** reviews the small and diverse but South Asia dominated academic literature on internal and regional migration for work in construction in developing countries. They identify cases and contexts in which migration helps construction workers exit poverty and those where such migration entrenches poverty. They identify several areas for future research including: research on women in construction work especially beyond South Asia; a focus on recruitment practices and processes; employment conditions and policy barriers and solutions to improvement; and greater use of mixed methods approaches.

[Download Working Paper 14](#)

WP 17 Poverty, Youth and rural-urban migration in Ethiopia by **Adamnesh Atanfu, Linda Oucho and Benjamin Zeitlyn** explores the relationships between poverty and rural-urban migration in Ethiopia. It analyses poverty driven migration from a poor rural woreda (district) in northern Ethiopia, to the nearby city of Bahir Dar and the capital, Addis Ababa. The research suggests that migration of this type does not lead to immediate flows of remittance income from migrants to their households and explains why this is, and migrants' and their households' plans to move out of poverty. The authors argue that there are important non-economic factors and long-term strategies that encourage migration even where working conditions are hard and returns are low. [Download Working Paper 17](#) and see the related policy brief [Rural-Urban Migration and Poverty in Ethiopia](#)

New Migrating out of Poverty Policy Briefs

RMMRU's 2012-14 regional project, 'The Impact of Migration on Poverty: The case of construction workers of India, Nepal and Bangladesh', used common methodologies in the three focus countries - including surveys of the workers and their families at origin and destination - to identify the mechanisms by which migration to this sector can lead to poverty reduction for households of sending families at source, and how the living and working conditions of migrant workers can be improved. Three new policy briefs outline the policy relevant findings of the research and make recommendations to address the problems.

About us

Migrating out of Poverty is a seven-year research programme consortium (RPC) funded by DFID. It focuses on the relationship between regional migration, internal migration and poverty and is located in five regions across Africa and Asia.

Our research aims to deepen the understanding of migration within and between developing countries in order to better equip migrants, organisations supporting them, and policy makers, with evidence to inform their efforts to reduce poverty.

Partners

Refugee & Migratory Movements Research Unit at Dhaka University, Bangladesh

Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Ghana

African Migration and Development Policy Centre in Nairobi, Kenya

The **Asia Research Institute** at the National University of Singapore

The **African Centre for Migration and Society** at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

The **School of Global Studies**, University of Sussex, UK

Internal Migrant Workers and the Construction Sector in Bangladesh: Tackling informality and exploitative labour practices, based on research on internal migrant construction workers in Bangladesh, highlights both their harsh working conditions and the support migration has provided to help them alleviate their families' poverty. The recommendations seek to address the fact that existing labour laws are not fully implemented in the sector; the workers lack of awareness of their rights; and unaccountable agents engage in informal recruitment practices.

[Download](#) [RMMRU](#) [Policy](#) [Brief](#) [11](#)

Internal migrant construction workers in Nepal: tackling exploitative labour practices to enhance migration's impact on poverty reduction, RMMRU's policy brief on the construction sector in Nepal, highlights the positive role that internal migration by construction workers has had in helping households escape poverty. However a lack of adequate safety and social protection policies have compromised the long term health of the workers, potentially undermining the benefits of their migration. The authors argue for a new consolidated and comprehensive policy that incorporates the positive aspects of the existing legislation while addressing the barriers to effective protection of construction workers.

[Download](#) [RMMRU](#) [Policy](#) [Brief](#) [12](#)

Impact of Labour Migration to the Construction Sector on Poverty: Evidence from India, the third policy brief in RMMRU's construction worker series, looks at internal migrant construction workers in India. While migrants have opportunities for higher remuneration in India's construction sector they also face a high level of work-related risks in addition to difficult living conditions at their destination. The authors recommend facilitating access to entitlements at destination, and improving regulation and enforcement of laws related to labour migration to improve the situation.

[Download RMMRU Policy Brief 13](#)

Other Activities

In addition to conducting research, partners in the Migrating out of Poverty Consortium present their work to a variety of non-academic audiences including policy makers, civil society - including migrant organisations - the media and the general public.

ARI's public symposium, 'Migration and Construction Work in Asia' held on 28 November 2014, presented the findings of their forthcoming research on Bangladeshi migrant men working in Singapore's construction industry. [Download the trailer for the documentary, 'Gone home'](#) on returned Bangladeshi migrant construction workers which was screened in full at the event.

RMMRU presented findings on Bangladeshi female migrants from their new study 'Institutional Strengthening of the Office of Labour Attaché: Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka' to the 'Policy Dialogue on Labour

Attachés: The protectors of female migrants in the Middle East' held on 17 November 2014. The dialogue stressed the need for coordination between the Bangladesh government, recruitment agencies and employers to protect female migrants abroad. It was covered in *The Daily Star*, *New Age*, and *The Financial Express*.

ACMS **closed their Migrating for Work programme** (MiWORC), with a series of research dissemination events held between September-November 2014 and a closing seminar. The meetings discussed migrant labour in South African public health, agriculture, domestic work, hospitality, and social security and social protection of migrants in South Africa and the South African Development Community (SADC) region. Visit <http://www.miworc.org.za/> for more information.

A good read

Miserable Migrants? Natural Experiment Evidence on International Migration and Objective and Subjective Well-Being by Steven Stillman, John Gibson, David McKenzie and Halahingano Rohorua *2015 World Development* 65:79-93

This paper compares successful and unsuccessful applicants to a migration lottery in order to examine the impact of migration on objective and subjective well-being. Its comparison between two groups who *wanted* to migrate shows that while international migration brings large improvements in objective measures of well-being, the impacts on subjective well-being are more complex. On average, mental health improves but happiness declines; self-rated welfare rises if viewed retrospectively but shows no change if we compare the current self-ratings of the groups of migrants and non-migrants. Similarly, migrants' self-rated social respect rises when viewed retrospectively but falls relative to non-migrants'. However, as migrants' frames of reference for subjective assessments and aspirations about their life-styles change with migration, asking retrospective questions about the benefits of migration may be misleading.

[Download the paper](#)



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