



Zimbabwe Country Programme

Briefing Note

August 2015

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 Programme](#) 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>](mailto:migrationrpc@sussex.ac.uk) or visit [<http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/>](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 Zimbabwe

The Consortium partner in Southern Africa, the Johannesburg-based African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS), conducted one research project in Zimbabwe.

1. Exploring Kinship, Social Network and Remittances-Supported Investment in Zimbabwe's Migrant Sending Areas

Estimates are that over one million Zimbabweans, mostly undocumented, have migrated to South Africa. Although there is an extended history of migration between the two countries, the figures escalated rapidly during Zimbabwe's acute political and economic crisis in the early 2000s. The livelihoods of millions in Zimbabwe depend on money earned in South Africa and invested or spent in Zimbabwe. This qualitative research project, conducted in three Zimbabwean primary sending zones, explored the degree to which remittances contribute to poverty reduction and wealth accumulation.

The project findings suggest that migration is often shaped by history, with current flows reflecting past ones even for small geographical units, and that migration processes are fundamentally organized around kinship and social networks which provide character to the remittance flows. In relation to the major question – does migration help people escape poverty – the results are not encouraging. In some instances, migrants and their families start small businesses, some of which are led by women who were not previously involved in economic activity. However, remittances are generally not invested in ways that provide sustainable income. These findings temper the euphoria over remittances' developmental potential and highlight the important social, environmental and political preconditions for remittances to become a driver of poverty reduction.

A dissemination workshop in Harare in March 2014 presented the results of the research to participants from government, civil society and researchers.

A working paper based on this research is available online:

'Confirmations, Coffins and Corn: Kinship, Social Networks and Remittances from South Africa to Zimbabwe': <<http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk/documents/wp18-dzingerai--mutopo-landau-2014-confirmations-coffins--corn-final.pdf>>

2. Household Survey on Migration Determinants and Impacts in Four Zimbabwean Sending Districts

Building on previously conducted qualitative work, this survey collected quantitative data from 1,195 households in three sending districts – Chivi, Hurungwe, and Gwanda and included 1,103 male and 426 female migrants. The data covered demographics, migration, remittances and wellbeing, and was administered to household heads as well as returned migrants. The data are now being uploaded and checked and will shortly underpin an analysis of the factors that mediate and shape the impact of migration on poverty. The data will form part of the open access dataset being constructed by the Consortium to provide quality data on migration, especially internal and regional migration, in developing countries.

The findings of this survey and its associated research will be disseminated in workshops aimed at Zimbabwean and South African policy makers along with regional actors such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).