



# MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

## SUMMARY

With the number of women migrating autonomously now representing approximately half of all international migrants, it is imperative that their contributions to development are recognised. Integrating a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach into national development and migration planning is crucial to realise the full potential of all migrants to development as well as to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women including migrants. Building on research and lessons learned from the joint EU - UN Women's migration project on "Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Worker's Labour and Human Rights", this Brief provides a gendered critique of the migration for development model, and offers practical guidelines focusing on entry points for mainstreaming migration into development planning from a gender perspective at every phase of the development planning process.

## Introduction

The increasing feminisation of migration recognises not only a rise in the number of women that are migrating, but specifically the number of women migrating autonomously in search of economic opportunities. There are many factors leading to an individual's decision to migrate, and for those in search of work these decisions are often influenced by a lack of opportunities in countries of origin or driven by new or changing labour demands in countries of destination. In many instances, migrating provides individuals with the opportunity to earn more than is possible in their country of origin, which in turn may be sent back home in the form of remittances, thus providing a source of income which can help mitigate economic challenges and directly support their family.

With international remittances surpassing both official development assistance and foreign direct investment, remittances can be a valuable

resource which can be utilised for development. And with the number of women now representing approximately half of the 244 million migrants worldwide<sup>1</sup>, which corresponds to an estimated USD\$300 billion in global remittances<sup>2</sup>, it is imperative that countries are responsive to the role that women migrants play in this process. Nevertheless, the dominant remittance for development models which have been utilised by countries have been woefully gender-blind, failing to recognise the specific challenges and needs of women migrants, which significantly undermines any possibility of recognising their full contributions to development. A gender-responsive approach to mainstreaming migration into development planning can contribute to addressing these challenges whilst ensuring that the development achieved is equitable, sustainable, and to the benefit of all.

This brief will outline pertinent issues in the migration and development discussion from a

<sup>1</sup> UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2016). "International Migration Report 2015: Highlights."

<sup>2</sup> World Bank Group (2016). "Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016: Third Edition."

## Policy Brief No. 5: Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning from a Gender Perspective

gender perspective, and provide practical guidelines for incorporating a gender-responsive approach to mainstreaming migration into development planning.

### Engendering the migration and development nexus

In contemporary discourse, the dominant relationship between migration and development is referred to as “remittances for development” or the “migration for development” model. This model frames migrants as a resource for economic development particularly for countries of origin. Policies incorporating the “remittances for development” paradigm focus on the role that remittances can have in promoting development through “inclusive financial democracy”, which includes the channelling of remittances through formal money transfer systems, lowering transfer costs, opening and utilising banks or depository institute (often referred to as ‘banking the unbanked’), and promoting saving and investments.<sup>3</sup>

However, the current framework of the “remittances for development” model has been criticized for being gender-blind, failing to address the structural challenges that women migrants face in terms of accessing and utilising these formal financial systems. This includes poor financial literacy, as well as a lack of information. Evidence from the Philippines<sup>4</sup> has shown that women migrants often prefer to bring money home when they return. This provides them with a better opportunity to determine how the money is spent, which has been shown to increase expenditure on

human capital particularly on children in the household.

By focusing solely on monetary remittances, the model also fails to consider the full range of contributions that women migrants make to development throughout the migration process, such as those provided through social remittances which including the transfer of ideas, behaviours and beliefs at all stages of migration.

To fully understand the contribution of women’s migration to development, it is also necessary to consider the social costs involved. These include the potential detrimental effects on families in countries of origin;<sup>5</sup> the role of the global care chain on perpetuating traditional gender norms; increased discrimination and social exclusion of migrant women in countries of origin, transit, and destination; and the negative effects of abusive and exploitative labour migration experiences.

It is increasingly understood that policy choices in countries of origin and destination determine whether a migrant’s remittances (monetary, skills, knowledge) will be translated into broader development gains.<sup>6</sup> However, if national development strategies do not recognise the specific contributions of migrant women, they will fail to realise the full potential all migrants offer and fail to sustainably empower society as a whole.<sup>7</sup> As such, ensuring that development policies are gender-responsive is critical to their success.

<sup>3</sup> Petrozziello, A. (2013). “Gender on the Move: Working on the Migration-Development Nexus from a Gender Perspective.” p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Cortes, P. (2013) “The Feminisation of International Migration and its Effects on the Children Left Behind: Evidence from the Philippines.”

<sup>5</sup> Macours, K. & Vakis, R. (2007). “Seasonal Migration and Early Childhood Development”, The World Bank.

<sup>6</sup> UN Women (2016). “Guide on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning from a Gender Perspective.”

<sup>7</sup> Petrozziello, A. (2013). “Gender on the Move: Working on the Migration-Development Nexus from a Gender Perspective.” p. 22.

## Addressing the interaction between migration and development in countries of destination

The benefit to destination countries of labour migration has largely been considered in terms of the ability for markets to access cheap labour. Recent push backs against labour migration in populist discourse have illustrated an ignorance or lack of understanding of the benefits that migration brings to destination countries. By not accounting for these broader social and economic benefits, destination countries have arguably left a vacuum in which negative trends have developed, including the normalisation of discriminatory behaviour, and an increase in xenophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric.

The contribution of care work to development in countries of destination illustrates a benefit largely made by women migrant workers. In addition to providing for the physical and emotional needs of people, caregiving facilitates the ability of the local workforce (which increasingly includes women) to access the job market. Therefore, care can be considered as the invisible base of the entire socio-economic system.<sup>8</sup> Owing to its lack of recognition, the contribution that women migrant workers make to development through the provision of these care services is rarely considered by destination countries.

The hiring of women migrant workers to assume care roles in destination countries also perpetuates the notion that care work is women's work.<sup>9</sup> This notion sits at the root of gender inequality and must be challenged if development is to be equitable.

## Practical Guidelines

<sup>8</sup> Orozco, A. (2009). "Global Perspectives on the Social Organisation of Care in Times of Crisis: Assessing the Situation" Working Paper 5: UN-INSTRAW.

<sup>9</sup> OHCHR (2013). "Gender Stereotyping as a Human Rights Violation.";

Mainstreaming migration issues into development planning with a gender perspective means recognising that women and men experience migration differently and face specific challenges throughout the migration process. To ensure that women migrants benefit from and contribute to development in the context of migration, their rights must be protected at all levels. To achieve this, national and local policies, programs, legislation, budgets and institutional structures must be harmonised within an overarching gender equality framework which places emphasis on human development.<sup>10</sup>

## Incorporating key international human rights norms

International legal and policy frameworks can be operationalized by policy makers to improve current "migration for development" models by ensuring that they are human rights-based and gender-responsive.

The following human rights mechanisms provide an overview of the key legal instruments that can be operationalised to fully recognise the rights of women migrant workers:

- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as further elaborated in General Recommendations No. 26 (2008) on women migrant workers (GR 26) and No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women;
- International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), as further elaborated in General Recommendation No. 25 (2000);

UNDESA (2004). "Women and International Migration."

<sup>10</sup> United Nations (2002). "Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview."

## Policy Brief No. 5: Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning from a Gender Perspective

- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), as further elaborated in General Comments No. 1 (2011) on Migrant Domestic Workers and No. 2 (2013) on the rights of migrant workers in an irregular situation;
- ILO's international labour standards including conventions of general application as well as those that contain specific provisions on migrant workers including the Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (No. 97), the Migrant Workers Convention, 1975 (No. 143) and, more recently, the ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, 2011 (No. 189), and the attending Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201).

### Developing a national framework for mainstreaming migration from a gender perspective

Integrating gender-responsive and human rights-based processes into national development and migration planning is crucial to realise the full potential of all migrants to development. The Global Migration Group's (GMG) Handbook on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning (2010)<sup>11</sup> offers six phases of the development planning cycle. The six-phase approach has been piloted in several countries, including the Philippines (one of the three pilot countries from the joint EU-UN Women global migration project), and has proven to be a successful tool for identifying entry points for gender-responsive migration policy in existing national policy frameworks.

The success of this approach relies on the commitment of all stakeholders involved, and the meaningful and inclusive involvement and participation of all relevant government agencies (i.e. labour, trade and economic, social development and welfare, education, and other), civil society, migrants – especially women migrant workers – migrant families and associations, and local communities.<sup>12</sup>

Key to ensuring that the development planning addresses the impact of migration in a gender-responsive manner, is strengthening the capacity of those who are responsible for development planning on the linkages between gender and migration. The GMG Handbook (2010) suggests a preparation phase which includes the creation of a “core team/working group” – a gender balanced group of experts who take a lead, secure the governmental mandate, and ensure that migration and development planning is conducted in a gender-responsive manner at every phase of the development planning cycle.

The six phases are outlined below:

#### Phase 1: Situational analysis and assessment

During this phase a review of existing research data, national policies, and legislation is conducted to outline existing gender gaps. Consultations with various stakeholders should take place, and mechanisms that will ensure their full involvement throughout the planning process must be adopted. Sex-disaggregated data (where available) of existing programs, laws, and situations related to women's livelihood strategies, particularly those of women migrant workers, should be compiled. This data should highlight gender issues within migration and development and provide a foundation for determining strategic priorities.

<sup>11</sup> Global Migration Group (2010). “Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners.”

<sup>12</sup> UN Women (2016). “Guide on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning from a Gender Perspective.”

## Phase 2: Strategic goals and priorities identification

The data from phase 1 will be utilised to identify and highlight areas of priority to be mainstreamed into government plans. These will be articulated into specific migrant women's gender equality goals, strategies and objectives, and incorporate specific gendered migration outputs and outcomes. Formulated goals should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. It is vital that during this stage the voices of vulnerable groups, specifically women migrants, be heard and integrated.

## Phase 3: Action/Program planning

Based on the goals and priorities identified in Phase 2, gender-responsive policies, programs, and plans should be formulated, which outline specific target beneficiaries, responsible government agencies, and relevant partners. Policies should address the broader experiences, realities, and challenges of all those impacted by migration (migrants and those who are left-behind), particularly women migrant workers. The subsequent action plans may be structured by thematic area and need to be consistent with national and local development plans. Mainstreaming should not duplicate programs but focus on existing ones, through strengthening the gender perspective, increasing integration across agencies and partners, and ensuring that monitoring and evaluation is possible.<sup>13</sup>

## Phase 4: Financing mechanisms and resource/funds sourcing

The formulation of a budget and the allocation of resources and funds in a strategic manner is crucial to the success of gender-responsive migration and development programmes. An “investment plan”

should be developed taking into consideration previously identified priority areas. Funding for programs and policy inventions may be sourced from (a) national government budgets; (b) private sectors; (c) international organisations; (d) migrant organisations and diaspora groups; (e) local government groups.<sup>14</sup>

## Phase 5: Implementation

During this phase concrete, practical step by step guides, including clearly defined implementation strategies, roles, functions and accountable persons, should be fully developed. Technical working groups, councils or committees should be formed to support migration and development mainstreaming mechanisms, to ensure that all policies, plans, programs and activities are gender-responsive. Additionally, a description of budgetary arrangements and a resource mobilisation plan should be formulated.

## Phase 6: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Monitoring and evaluation tracks progress of actions taken, increases accountability and ownership and improves quality. To ensure that M&E efforts are gender-responsive, gender equality and women's empowerment indicators should be used to analyse performance. During this phase, it is important to examine the casual mechanisms between indicators and outcomes. M&E should consider changes in the migration phenomenon, as well as progress in overall human development. The five levels of gender equality and women's empowerment (welfare, raising awareness, access, participation, and control) as outlined by UN Women, should be taken into

<sup>13</sup> UN Women (2016). “Guide on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning from a Gender Perspective.” p. 17F.

<sup>14</sup> International Organization for Migration (2014). “Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development Plans: Naga City Experiences in Focus.”

## Policy Brief No. 5: Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning from a Gender Perspective

special consideration to determine the impact on migrant women and migrant women workers.<sup>15</sup>

### Conclusion

Migration can contribute significantly to the development strategies of both countries of origin and of destination, largely through the provision of remittances and the transfer of new ideas and beliefs. However, for this to be fully realised, migration and development policies must recognise the full contributions of the more than 120 million migrant women. With remittances now overtaking both official development assistance and foreign direct investment, governments have begun to recognise the importance of remittances in development programmes. However, migration and development policies have been slow to recognise migration as a gendered phenomenon. For the contributions of women migrant workers to be fully recognised, it is important that policy makers have a clear understanding of the broader experiences of migrant women. Where current migration and development frameworks only consider financial contributions of migrants and subsequently overlook the social contributions made through the transfer of knowledge, behaviours, and ideas, a gender-responsive approach calls for a refocusing on human development.

For the success of mainstreaming migration into development planning from a gender perspective to be sustainable, there must be a fulfilment of all human rights obligations at all stages of migration. This requires a commitment and willingness from all stakeholders and the meaningful involvement and participation of all migrants, especially women migrant workers, their families and communities. The main challenges must be addressed as a priority, which involves coherent and institutional

coordination among the national and local government offices, as well as all other stakeholders involved. It is imperative that all migration and development deliberations integrate a gender perspective throughout, to ensure that the contributions of migrant women to development are recognised.

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<sup>15</sup> UN Women (2016). "Guide on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning from a Gender Perspective." p. 21.

**Policy Brief No. 5: Mainstreaming Migration into  
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