



Migration as opportunity

Innovation, policies and practice

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Key messages

- There is a broad spectrum of policies and programmes that aim to make the most of human mobility in host countries and countries of origin, facilitating migrants' socioeconomic contributions and, ultimately, development outcomes.
- These interventions fall into two categories: those that seek to introduce new migration pathways or expand existing ones; and those focused on maximising migrant communities' socioeconomic contributions.
- Current practice provides a strong foundation, but more can be done to optimise migrants' contributions, remove barriers and scale up impacts.
- The Covid-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to build new momentum, placing human mobility at the heart of the global recovery.
- Future interventions should begin from an understanding of the political economy in specific contexts, address policy barriers to migrants' contributions and focus on building trust between diverse stakeholders.
- Interventions should be designed with outcomes in mind and embed a clear focus on upholding migrants' rights, alongside wider vulnerabilities and inequalities.



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Contents

Acknowledgements	3
List of boxes and figures	5
Acronyms	6
Executive summary	7
1 Introduction	9
1.1 Overview	9
1.2 Methodology	9
1.3 Summary of literature and policy discussions	9
1.4 Productive migration: a typology	10
2 New or expanded migration pathways	13
2.1 Migration pathways designed by host countries	14
2.2 Migration pathways designed by countries of origin	15
2.3 Migration pathways as partnerships	17
3 Unlocking the contributions of migrant populations	19
3.1 Increasing access to work and business opportunities	19
3.2 Maximising migrants' resources for development outcomes	23
4 From theory to practice	27
4.1 Maximising opportunities, overcoming challenges	27
4.2 Next steps for practitioners	29
References	32

List of boxes and figures

Boxes

Box 1	In focus: migration and Covid-19	10
Box 2	Migration shortage lists in Malaysia and the UK	14
Box 3	Start-up visas in Thailand	14
Box 4	In focus: successful circular migration in New Zealand and the Pacific	16
Box 5	State-supported migration in the Philippines	17
Box 6	Return programmes in China and Jamaica	17
Box 7	German and Australian skills partnerships with Viet Nam, Sri Lanka and the Pacific	18
Box 8	Mutual mobility in West Africa	18
Box 9	Skills portability and recognition	20
Box 10	In focus: mitigating risks from policy adjustments	21
Box 11	Supportive policy environments in countries of origin	21
Box 12	Supporting human and social capital in the European Union, the United States and Australia	22
Box 13	Supporting women-owned businesses in Sweden	22
Box 14	Efficient remittance transfers through 'Directo a Mexico' and 'Saver Asia'	24
Box 15	Savings and financial literacy in Nepal	24
Box 16	Supporting community development through cooperatives in the Philippines	25
Box 17	AFFORD African Business Centre	25
Box 18	Diaspora bonds in Israel, Ethiopia and Nigeria	26

Figures

Figure 1	Defining productive migration	11
Figure 2	Productive migration typology	12
Figure 3	Introducing new or extended migration pathways	13
Figure 4	Circular migration	15
Figure 5	Focusing on existing migrant populations	19

Acronyms

AFFORD	African Foundation for Development
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Corporation for International Cooperation)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KNOMAD	Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RSE	Recognised Seasonal Employer
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDC	Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative

Executive summary

Migrants already make significant socioeconomic contributions in host countries and countries of origin, but more can be done to optimise these contributions and remove the barriers to achieving them. This working paper reviews existing practice and proposes a typology to identify the different types of programmatic and policy intervention that can maximise migration's socioeconomic benefits – described here as 'productive migration' interventions. Building on this, the paper presents a series of shared challenges and next steps for practitioners and policymakers seeking to advance programming in this area.

Migration can be understood as a key driver and enabler of all development goals. Migrants' contributions to socioeconomic benefits – and ultimately sustainable development – should not be understood in a purely economic sense, but also encompass social goods at the national, individual and community levels.

Productive migration interventions can be divided into two main clusters:

1. interventions that introduce *new migration pathways or expand existing ones* to help achieve socioeconomic benefits
2. interventions that focus on *existing migrant populations* and ways of maximising their socioeconomic contributions.

Importantly, however, these categories of interventions are not considered mutually exclusive and successful efforts may often deploy different strategies in combination.

Interventions which focus on new and expanded migration pathways can be structured primarily around the needs of host countries, countries of origin, or developed in partnership between the two. Such pathways can play an important role in enabling development contributions, both from the perspective of host

countries and countries of origin, as well as among individual migrants, host and sending communities. Well known policy interventions in this area include circular migration programmes, start-up visas, migration deployment by countries of origin, incentivised return programmes, and recent innovations such as Global Skills Partnerships. Carefully designed migration pathways can help reduce or eliminate the high costs often associated with migration journeys, ensuring that migrants begin their stay in host societies already equipped with financial resources while avoiding risks and vulnerabilities associated with irregular journeys, both of which may have knock-on impacts on their future contributions.

In contrast, interventions aimed at maximising the socioeconomic contributions of existing migrant populations already resident in host countries do not necessarily aim to increase migration opportunities (although this may happen in tandem) but to *unlock* positive contributions from migrant communities. This may involve interventions which aim to increase migrants' access to work and business opportunities, including by:

- creating a supportive policy environment – for example through the expansion of rights to work, skills recognition or regularisation
- supporting migrants' human and social capital through education, language and skills training, and efforts to expand migrants' networks and knowledge of local business contexts
- loans and micro-financing
- private sector interventions, such as work placements, training schemes and proactive recruitment.

Alternatively, interventions may work from the assumption that migrants are already economically and socially engaged in host communities, and instead aim to maximise the

use of their resources (financial or otherwise) for development outcomes. Such interventions include activities to increase migrants' financial literacy and access to financial services, to reduce remittance costs and maximise remittance impacts in countries of origin, and programmes aiming to facilitate diaspora investment and skills transfer.

While the benefits of migration for sustainable development are clear – and a broad spectrum of practice already exists aiming to better leverage this potential – much more can be done to extend and scale up these benefits through effective programmatic approaches. Existing practice makes clear that successful interventions must address a number of challenges including a lack of data, a tension between innovation and risk appetite among key stakeholders, the building of trust and common understanding through coherent systems across a range of actors, and the appropriate inclusion of gender considerations. Equally, interventions must be carefully designed in order to mitigate against inadvertent negative consequences, including possible risks to migrants themselves (including of abuse and exploitation), impacts on host community members' own access to work and opportunities, and negative consequences in countries of origin, including the entrenchment of inequalities and wider social impacts.

This paper presents five key recommendations for practitioners and policymakers seeking to make the most of human mobility through targeted interventions:

- 1. Begin from an understanding of political economy.** Successful interventions should start from a realistic assessment of the current political space in relevant contexts, exploring what can already be done within these parameters while simultaneously seeking ways to expand the space for future action.
- 2. Develop the foundations for success, addressing policy barriers from the start and building trust between different stakeholders.** Effective interventions should address fundamental challenges for success early on, including through a focus on developing a policy environment that facilitates socioeconomic benefits and by building strong working relationships, trust and shared expectations between diverse stakeholders.
- 3. Where possible, build on what already exists.** Interventions can be particularly effective where they focus on how existing interventions could be scaled up, replicated and expanded. While interventions will not be exactly replicable across contexts, common characteristics and modalities can be identified, as well as lessons learned.
- 4. Take outcomes as a starting point for design.** Interventions should be designed with clear social and economic outcomes in mind, accompanied by a practical theory of change for how interventions will contribute towards achieving them.
- 5. Embed a focus on rights, inequalities and vulnerabilities.** An embedded focus throughout programme design, implementation and evaluation enables interventions to avoid unintended negative outcomes and maximise opportunities.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

In recent years, the links between migration and sustainable development have increasingly been recognised in theory and policy discussions. Migration can improve development and investment in origin countries, fill labour gaps and foster innovation in host countries, and contribute to development in transit countries. While public narratives have sometimes foregrounded concerns regarding migration's impacts on host communities, evidence suggests its overall impact is most often positive and labour market impacts for native-born workers are negligible (OECD and ILO, 2018).

Migration is an effective poverty reduction tool – not just for migrants themselves, but also for their families and wider communities, both in host countries and countries of origin (Foresti and Hagen-Zanker, 2018). However, questions remain about how this can be better supported in practice. While migrants' potential to contribute towards development outcomes is increasingly acknowledged, various barriers and policy obstacles exist. As a result, migration does not always achieve its full potential to increase socioeconomic outcomes.

This working paper – commissioned by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) – explores how programmatic interventions can better support this potential, drawing on existing models and examples of good practice. It puts forward a framework for facilitating what is termed 'productive migration' – in which the socioeconomic benefits of migration are unlocked to the advantage of all.

1.2 Methodology

This study draws on a desk-based review of existing policy and practice. The review aimed to identify relevant models and examples of good practice in programming, from a range of contexts, that aim to maximise the socioeconomic benefits associated with migration. This review was supplemented by insights shared by practitioners during a private roundtable event hosted in May 2020 by ODI and DFID, during which participants discussed additional programmatic examples, shared learnings and discussed next steps to better capitalise on the benefits of human mobility.

1.3 Summary of literature and policy discussions

The interaction between migration and development has been increasingly prominent in development theory and policy discussions since the 2006 UN High-Level Dialogue on 'international migration and development' (UN General Assembly, 2006), leading to the establishment of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). Migration is addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with goals 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities) and 17 (partnerships for the goals) making direct reference to optimising migration. In particular, goal 10 discusses facilitating 'orderly, safe, regular and responsible' migration and reducing remittance transaction costs (UN, 2016).

More broadly, migration is increasingly understood as a key driver and enabler of all development goals (Foresti and Hagen-Zanker, 2018).¹ The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) provided global

1 ODI examined the role migration can play in meeting the 2030 Agenda in the research series Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (www.odi.org/projects/2849-migration-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development).

Box 1 In focus: migration and Covid-19

Covid-19 has created huge challenges for migrants across the globe, increasing insecurities and vulnerabilities that were already present in many migration journeys. Global lockdowns have restricted mobility and caused unemployment spikes in key sectors leading to an estimated drop in remittances of 20% globally (World Bank, 2020). Migrants have faced hostility and new restrictions in some countries due to perceived risks to public health (Trilling, 2020). Where not impacted by unemployment, many migrants are concentrated in sectors in which risks to health are higher during the Covid-19 pandemic and safeguards and protections may be less readily available, while facing barriers to accessing basic services (see for example Foley and Piper, 2020).

Despite these challenges, the Covid-19 pandemic has also had important implications for migration policy and practice, making the social and economic benefits of migration particularly visible. The pandemic has demonstrated the role migrants across the world play in the continued functioning of economies and societies. They have been recognised as ‘key workers’ in sectors from healthcare to agriculture and beyond (see ODI, 2020). Equally, it has highlighted the obstacles that prevent this potential being unlocked, spurring policy and practical innovation to unlock migrants’ potential contributions to the Covid-19 response. While the long term implications are not yet clear, the Covid-19 pandemic presents an opportunity for a shift in migration narratives, policy and practice towards supporting skills and facilitating contributions – while also highlighting the importance of protecting individuals’ safety and rights (Foresti, 2020).

affirmation of the development opportunities offered by migration (UN, 2018), being explicitly rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with signatory states committing to ‘create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries’ (ibid., objective 19). In parallel, the literature on migration for development has grown significantly in recent decades, with a particular focus on migrant remittances² and the impact of labour migration on countries of origin.³ Recent research has also recognised significant obstacles to supporting the development potential of migration – for example, mobility restrictions, migrants’ access to decent work, and the concentration of urban migrants in the informal sector (Foresti and Hagen-Zanker, 2018). An emerging area of

research therefore explores how migration can be optimised for positive development outcomes, emphasising the role of supportive policy interventions (Portes, 2009; Foresti and Hagen-Zanker, 2018; Clemens et al., 2018). Although its implications are yet to be fully seen, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought many of these questions – as well as the socioeconomic benefits of migration – to the fore (see Box 1).

1.4 Productive migration: a typology

This working paper presents a framework for interventions that can better support migration’s potential contributions to socioeconomic benefits – and ultimately sustainable development.⁴ Importantly, this is not understood in a purely

2 The literature on remittances covers a wider variety of areas, including: general assessment of their role and impact (de Haas, 2006; 2007; Cohen, 2011); studies exploring how best to optimise remittance practices (Hall, 2010; Irving et al., 2010; Hagen-Zanker, 2014); and those focusing on possible trade-offs in terms of impacts on inequality, social relations and household disruption (Shen et al., 2010; Graham et al., 2012; IOM, 2018).

3 The literature includes significant debate over whether this amounts to a ‘brain drain’ (Development Research Centre, 2009; Skeldon, 2009; Bradby, 2014) or indeed whether this question needs complete reassessment (Clemens, 2009).

4 While the discussion here focuses primarily on ‘voluntary’ migration, some relevant examples and lessons learned are also provided from displacement contexts, ensuring that good practice is drawn from the broad spectrum of human mobility.

Figure 1 Defining productive migration



economic sense, but also encompasses migration that creates social goods – at the national, individual and community levels – such as those outlined in the SDGs: to reduce poverty (SDG 1), increase access to health and education (3 and 4), promote gender equality (5), facilitate sustainable living (11), and build peace and good governance (16).

The framework for interventions presented here is described in terms of supporting ‘productive migration’.⁵ Broadly speaking, this can be defined as programmatic approaches that seek to maximise the engagement of migrants of all types with private and public sector actors, thereby enhancing sustainable development for host countries and countries of origin, while also increasing well-being and socioeconomic gains among migrants themselves, host and sending communities (see Figure 1). As discussed further in chapter 4, such interventions are considered a complementary – and to date often under-recognised – part of broader migration programming and not a replacement for a

continued focus on migrants’ rights, protection and humanitarian needs.

Productive migration interventions are based on the assumption that, while in many cases socioeconomic benefits are already present, there is a spectrum of policy and programmatic interventions that can be applied to maximise them. Importantly, ‘productive migration’ is not seen as a binary of productive/unproductive migrants but instead a spectrum where the varied social and economic contributions of *all* migrants are brought to the fore through supportive interventions. Such interventions span the spectrum of human mobility and can be applicable to different groups of migrants, including migrants with different skills, regular and irregular migrants, and forcibly displaced populations and refugees (although additional considerations may apply in regard to the latter).

This working paper reviews existing practice to put forward a typology for productive migration interventions (see Figure 2), which are divided into two main clusters:

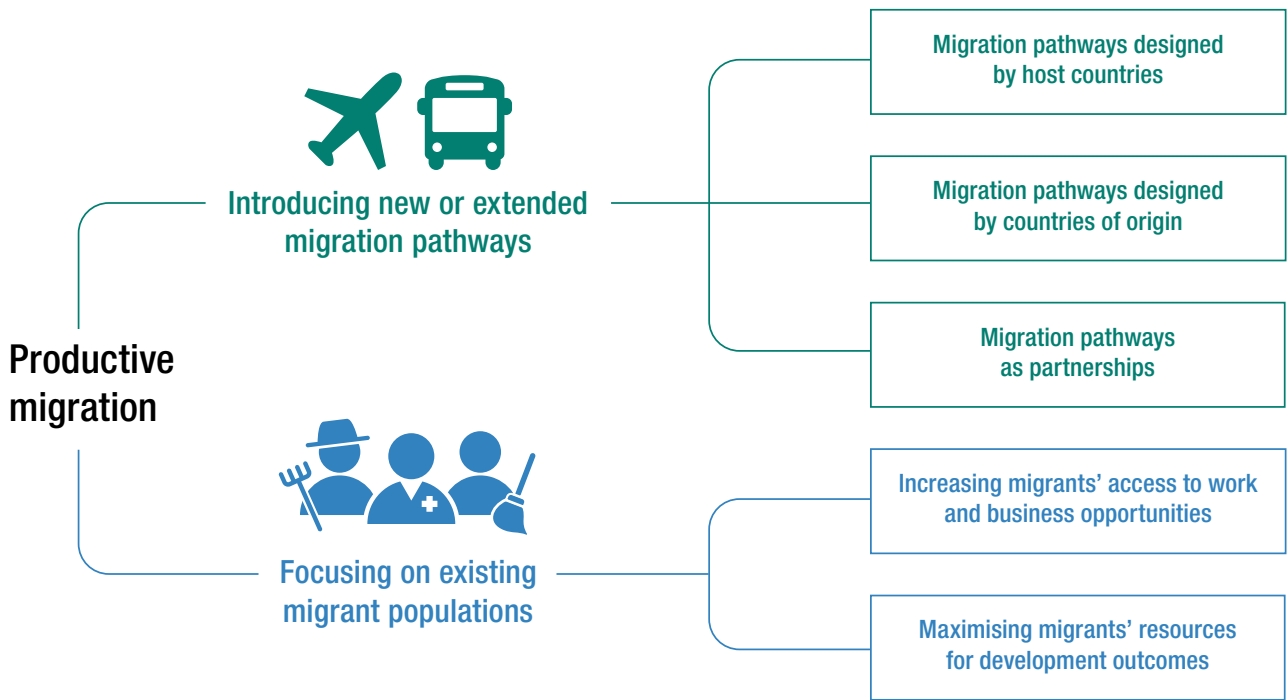
⁵ The term ‘productive migration’ is used by DFID to include a wide range of policies and programmes that aim to maximise migration’s social and economic benefits and, concurrently, its contributions to sustainable development. However, different agencies label programming in this area in various different ways. For example, some use the descriptor ‘migration for development’. While this working paper uses the term ‘productive migration’, it is interchangeable with other terminology that refers to such interventions.

1. interventions that introduce *new migration pathways* or *expand existing ones* to help achieve socioeconomic benefits
2. interventions that focus on *existing migrant populations* and ways of maximising their socioeconomic contributions.

Importantly, however, none of the categories within this typology are considered mutually exclusive and successful approaches may often be

holistic, combining different types of interventions. Chapter 2 outlines the different types of interventions falling into this first category, while chapter 3 focuses on the second grouping. With the typology outlined, chapter 4 concludes the paper with a discussion of how such interventions can be brought from theory into practice, outlining key considerations in order to maximise opportunities and avoid risks.

Figure 2 Productive migration typology



2 New or expanded migration pathways

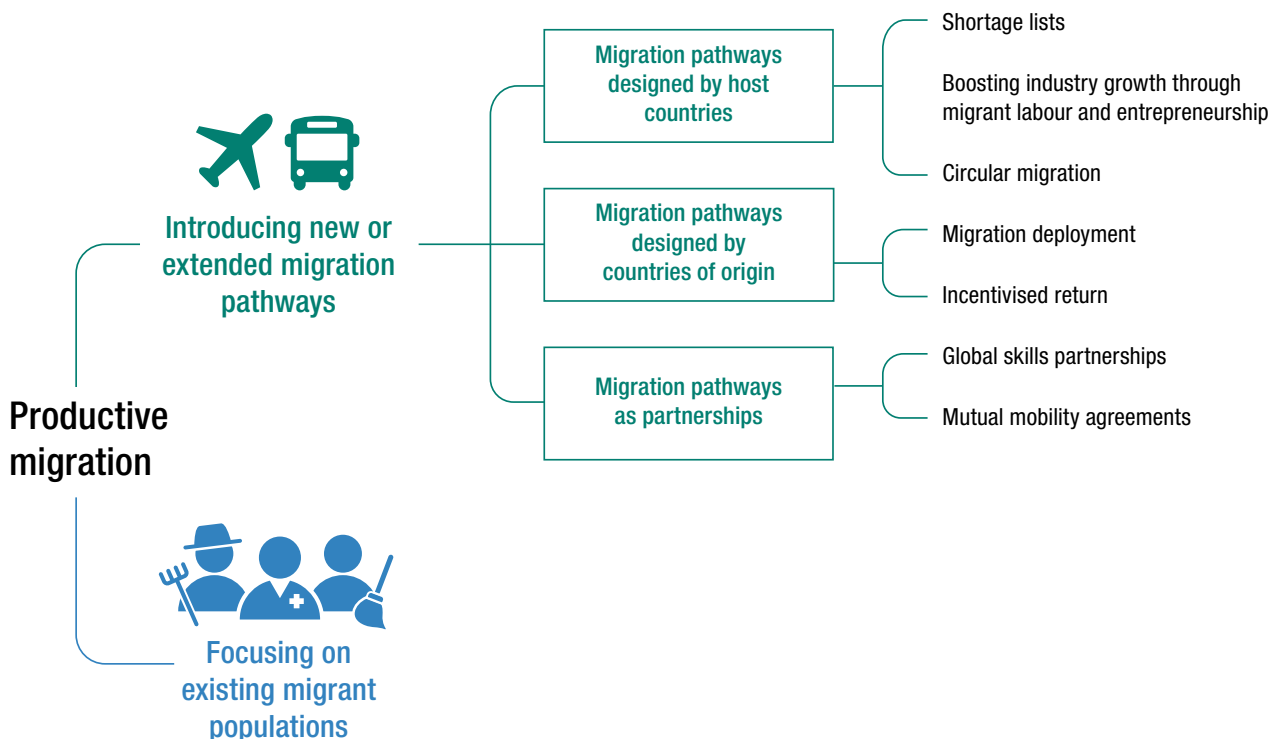
In many contexts, socioeconomic benefits are – or can be – facilitated by the introduction of new migration pathways, or the expansion of existing ones, whether structured primarily around the needs of host countries or countries of origin, or developed in partnership between the two (Figure 3).

Such pathways can play an important role in enabling development contributions, both from the perspective of host countries and countries of origin, as well as that of individual migrants. Among other considerations, where regular migration pathways are more widely accessible and affordable, this can eliminate significant costs. Embarking on a migration journey usually comes

with high costs attached, with some journeys costing more than a year’s worth of future income. These costs are particularly acute where irregular journeys are taken as opposed to regular pathways, (ILO, 2017; KNOMAD, 2017). Carefully designed pathways can help to reduce or eliminate such costs, ensuring that migrants begin their stay in host societies already equipped with financial resources, while avoiding risks and vulnerabilities associated with irregular journeys, both of which may have knock-on impacts on their future contributions.

This chapter outlines different programming options for creating new or expanded migration pathways and includes examples of where this has been put into practice.

Figure 3 Introducing new or extended migration pathways



2.1 Migration pathways designed by host countries

A range of interventions aim to increase inbound migration based primarily on host countries' labour market and development needs, from the use of shortage lists to circular migration programmes.

2.1.1 Shortage lists

Countries and firms routinely recruit migrants to fill roles in sectors that under-recruit among their own nationals. In order to facilitate this, governments often create shortage occupation lists to ensure the recruitment of necessary skills (see Box 2). Private sector interaction is crucial, ensuring that shortage lists are rooted in firms' labour needs and job opportunities.

Shortage lists can be further optimised through the use of compatible talent pools to enable employers to quickly find migrant talent through specialised services. For example, Talent Beyond Boundaries provides a talent catalogue to employers, allowing them to search through over 15,000 refugees registered on their talent pool. Employers can download an autogenerated CV and recruit from the pool to fill their employment gaps (Talent Beyond Boundaries, 2020).

Box 2 Migration shortage lists in Malaysia and the UK

With support from the World Bank, Malaysia designed and implemented a Critical Occupations List to meet the growing demand for skilled work in the country. The list allows the Malay government to identify skills shortages in key sectors, facilitating recruitment from abroad with dedicated visa entry.

Similarly, the UK's Shortage Occupation List, set each year by the Migration Advisory Committee, identifies key skills lacking in the UK economy, which are then prioritised in visa decisions.

Source: World Bank, 2019b; UK Home Office, 2020

2.1.2 Boosting industry growth through migrant labour and entrepreneurship

Migration can also be used to support the development of specific industries. Some low- and middle-income countries have boosted growth through the large-scale engagement of low-wage migrant labour to spur labour-intensive industries, for example the development of manufacturing industries in Malaysia and Thailand (World Bank, 2018). While this strategy has proved highly successful for economic development and industrialisation, countries such as Malaysia can face problems in the longer term. For example, a readily available low-cost migrant workforce can slow innovation and reduce incentives for businesses to invest in technology (Jian Wei et al., 2018).

Elsewhere, many countries have made efforts to support industry and wider economic development through targeted entry routes for those looking to start a business or invest in the country. Initiatives in this area include 'start-up' visas, which countries such as Thailand have made available to target the growth of specific industries (see Box 3).

2.1.3 Circular migration

Circular migration schemes or seasonal/temporary work programmes are another common policy tool used by host countries to recruit migrant labour for short-term work (see Figure 4). Such programmes

Box 3 Start-up visas in Thailand

Thailand has developed a simple entry visa for skilled migrants that includes categories for talented workers, executives, investors and start-up entrepreneurs. The SMART visa offers two years' permission to stay and work eligibility for migrants' spouses and children. It is targeted at 10 industries classed as development priorities, including electronics, digital, automation and robotics, biofuels and renewable energy. The visa requires entrepreneurs to have health insurance, to deposit funds in Thailand, and to set up a company within their first year of residence.

Source: Siam Legal, 2020

are often seasonal and can recruit for roles that are only needed for a specific period, such as jobs in agriculture. A circular migration scheme operates by providing temporary permission for migrants to fill (often short-term) opportunities, for which they are recruited specifically. They are unable to change employment or naturalise their status, but many schemes allow migrants to be re-recruited for the following season after returning home.

For host countries and employers, the ability to recruit workers to fill temporary or seasonal work enables greater production of goods or increased output. This in turn boosts local communities and the wider economy. Migrants and their immediate families also benefit from increased wages earned abroad, which can in turn generate wider benefits for countries of origin, particularly where this is prioritised in the scheme's design. However, unless conducted at scale, such programmes are often expensive in relation to their eventual benefits, underscoring the need to learn from the relatively few successful examples where this has been achieved at scale (see Box 4).

2.2 Migration pathways designed by countries of origin

A second group of interventions aims to facilitate new or expanded migration pathways (whether return or outbound), designed primarily by countries of origin and based around their

developmental needs. These interventions incentivise nationals to migrate abroad or to bring new skills and capital home.

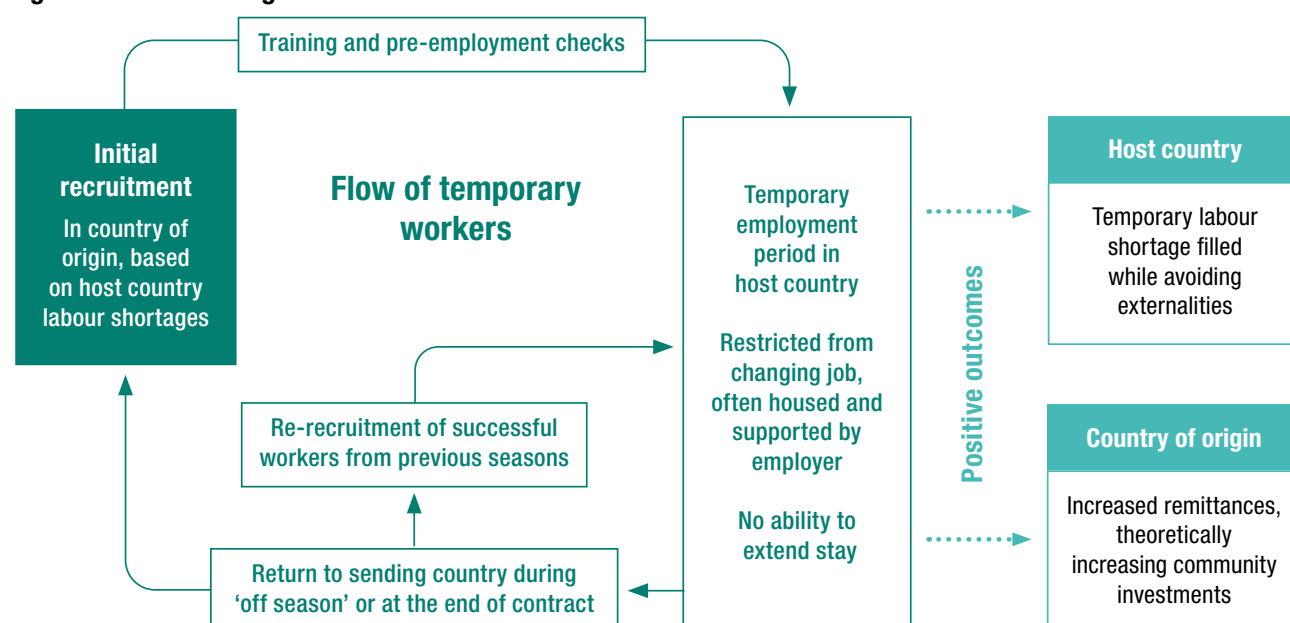
2.2.1 Migration deployment

Migration deployment relates to policy and programmatic packages developed by countries of origin which aim to incentivise nationals to migrate abroad for employment, increasing development through remittances and/or skills returns. The pre-departure training taken as part of 'migration deployment' in countries of origin can assist migrants with skills portability, while increasing both their protection and opportunities. The Philippines provides a notable example in this category (see Box 5).

2.2.2 Incentivised return programmes

Another set of interventions seeks to incentivise the return of migrants to countries of origin, mobilising the human and economic capital they have gained abroad, often targeting migrants with sought-after skillsets. Some countries incentivise return on a temporary basis to transfer skills to countries of origin in key sectors – for example, Afghanistan's 'temporary return of qualified nationals' programme, which has targeted healthcare workers (Fanjul et al., 2018). Other countries, such as China and Jamaica, have incentivised migrants to return on a longer-term or permanent basis (see Box 6).

Figure 4 Circular migration



Box 4 In focus: successful circular migration in New Zealand and the Pacific

Circular migration programmes have a long history, most notably through ‘guest worker’ schemes in Europe which were a popular policy solution to post-war labour shortages. However, these schemes largely broke down as many migrants (such as Turkish workers in Germany) applied for family reunification and settlement and chose not to return (Castles, 1986).

Castles (2006) later noted the ‘resurrection’ of temporary work schemes in Europe and elsewhere, some of which attempted to remedy the design flaws of earlier schemes. Successful schemes must mitigate for the risk that migrants choose to overstay. They should also consider possible impacts on short-term employment for nationals, working closely with employers to ensure that vacancies do not overlap with areas in which nationals could fill jobs. More broadly, they should also consider how, following short-term placements, upskilled workers can be absorbed into country of origin labour markets.

New Zealand’s Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) programme provides an example of how to overcome these challenges. Announced in 2006 in response to labour shortages in the wine industry, the programme is administered through a government–private sector partnership. Alongside benefits in New Zealand, the programme aimed to have a developmental impact in the Pacific region by hiring workers from poorer Pacific Islands communities where there were few jobs available.

To benefit from the scheme, employers had to first lodge their vacancies with the government to ensure that no New Zealanders could fill them. They were then able to recruit in Pacific Islands Forum countries from a pre-screened ‘work-ready pool’ of potential employees, organised by the Ministry of Labour in the sending country. Potential migrants would apply to join the pool to be eligible for selection, having passed pre-employment screening. Employers were required to register and take out a recruiter licence, pay half of workers’ return airfare, and cover pastoral care and rentable accommodation for migrant workers during their stay. New Zealand’s development department, New Zealand AID (NZAID), provided pre-departure orientation material, visa processing, and checked migrants’ compliance with regulations in their country of origin.

The programme’s successes stemmed from involving private firms in its administration alongside government, and allowing migrants to return in subsequent years based on employers’ recommendations, thus mitigating the risk of overstaying and increasing the ability to retain skilled workers. An evaluation found one instance (in its first year) of New Zealand worker displacement, but in many cases, the growth of farms led to increased jobs for New Zealand workers at levels higher up the production chain. The programme sent back NZ\$5.3 million to Tonga and NZ\$9.7 million to Vanuatu in its first two years – roughly 50% and 25% of their respective annual export earnings. While circular migration programmes can risk creating inequalities in countries of origin, Vanuatu and Tonga created schemes to incentivise migrants to fund development in their communities – for example, by improving utility access, schooling and cooperatives – thereby ensuring the wider distribution of benefits.

Source: Gibson and McKenzie, 2014

Diaspora organisations can also play a role in facilitating return migration, often on a temporary basis or through virtual return programmes, using technology to facilitate diaspora members’ ability to contribute their skills in countries of origin remotely. For example, AFFORD (African

Foundation for Development) creates pathways for members of African diasporas in Europe to return temporarily to Africa to upskill SMEs on a voluntary basis (Opoku-Owusu, 2020). For a more detailed discussion of diaspora skills transfer see sub-section 3.2.3.

2.3 Migration pathways as partnerships

Rather than focusing primarily on host countries or countries of origin, a third set of interventions seeks to develop migration pathways through partnerships between host and origin countries based on the principle of equal benefits. These partnerships can focus on enhancing the flow of skills and human capital between countries, or on enabling greater mobility within a region.

2.3.1 Global skills partnerships

Global skills partnerships (Clemens, 2017; Clemens et al., 2018) build on some of the models outlined above. Such partnerships involve sending skilled workers from smaller economies to larger economies. However, additional interventions are introduced to mitigate the

Box 5 State-supported migration in the Philippines

The Philippines supports its nationals to work abroad through government agencies that offer training and orientation. As part of this model, the country has a network of offices globally, which support and protect its workers abroad. This model of migration ‘deployment’ has successfully facilitated remittance-led development.

While large-scale migration deployment can have positive developmental impacts, these programmes require mitigating strategies to address risks. The experience of the Philippines – and also of communities in Eastern Europe and elsewhere – demonstrates the far-reaching social consequences of these programmes, including long-distance parenting, the creation of ‘ghost villages’, and a lack of key age groups within communities.

Sources: Calzado, 2007; Santos, 2015; Martino and Rechka, 2015; Asis, 2017

possible loss of resources and human capital as skilled individuals migrate in search of better pay.

As part of the model, migration pathways are accompanied by training programmes in countries of origin, run by destination countries (see Box 7).⁶ The destination country can tailor specific training to their needs (with potential private sector input and cost-sharing), while also training more individuals than can migrate to the destination partner. As a result – for those who migrate – the cost of training individuals is not placed on the (often poorer) countries of origin. Meanwhile, since not all those who complete the training go on to migrate, a new pool of skilled labour is developed within the country of origin. Global Skills Partnerships require buy-in from a wide range of stakeholders, including different ministries in both host countries and countries of origin, as well as substantial private sector engagement.

2.3.2 Mutual mobility agreements

Mutual mobility agreements offer another way of opening up migration pathways for mutual benefit, allowing migrants to freely move, work and settle in participating countries. While such schemes can create significant benefits, participating states may

Box 6 Return programmes in China and Jamaica

Since 2002, China has created a series of policies to incentivise graduates abroad to return to China, with offers of preferential employment and favourable salaries and taxation schemes. By incentivising their return, the government was able to bring skilled migrants and valuable human capital back to China, boosting economic growth.

Likewise, Jamaica has a return-talent management programme which covers airfares, subsidises moving costs, provides support in looking for employment and subsidises returnees’ living costs.

Source: Debnath, 2016

⁶ The roundtable discussion highlighted the example of a pilot global skills partnership between Belgium and Morocco, known as Palim, which assists Moroccan development while filling labour shortages in Flanders (Enabel, 2019).

Box 7 German and Australian skills partnerships with Viet Nam, Sri Lanka and the Pacific

The German government has developed skills partnerships in Viet Nam and Sri Lanka, training potential migrants in basic nursing. This allows Germany to directly meet its own labour market demand, while investing in long-term social capital and visible benefits for training institutions in countries of origin, allowing for shared gains.

Australia has developed a similar partnership called the Australia Pacific Training Coalition, developing five specialist technical training centres in Pacific nations, which focus on developing skills needed by Australian employers.

Source: GIZ, 2016; Clemens, 2017; Clemens et al., 2018

navigate a complex political balance to ensure continued support, as seen through negative responses and anti-migrant sentiment in some member states towards freedom of movement in the European Union (EU) (Vasilopoulou and Talving, 2019).⁷ There are several examples beyond Europe of different models for mutual mobility agreements, albeit with varying levels of practical implementation, including among West African states (see Box 8), Latin America's free movement of workers in Mercosur countries (Brumat and Acosta, 2019), the East African Community's Common Market Protocol (EAC, 2020), the African Union's Free Movement Protocol and mutual mobility arrangements between Australia and New Zealand (Smith, 2014).

Box 8 Mutual mobility in West Africa

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed mobility agreements and principles between its member countries. 'The common approach to migration' sets out the goal of freedom of movement within the ECOWAS zone, providing the right of residence and establishment to individuals in the community – a key goal for member states who are keen to facilitate migration for development.

Source: ECOWAS Commission, 2007

⁷ ODI has examined public attitudes to migration in Europe and elsewhere in its series 'Public narratives and attitudes towards refugees and other migrants' (www.odi.org/publications/10826-understanding-public-attitudes-towards-refugees-and-migrants).

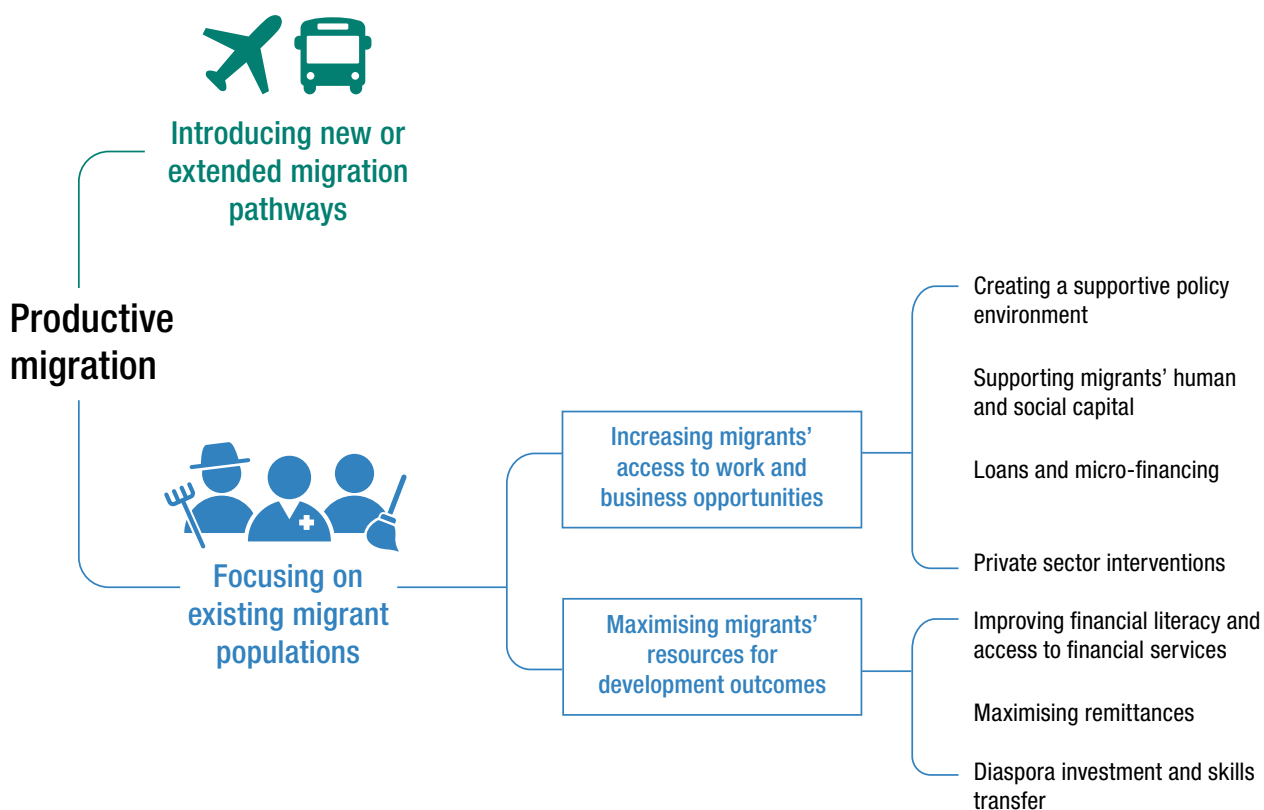
3 Unlocking the contributions of migrant populations

This chapter outlines a second cluster of interventions focused on supporting and expanding the socioeconomic contributions of migrant populations already resident in host countries (see Figure 5). The goal of such interventions is not necessarily to increase migration opportunities (although this may happen in tandem) but to *unlock* positive contributions from migrant communities.

3.1 Increasing access to work and business opportunities

Socioeconomic benefits can be unlocked through a wide set of interventions aiming to increase migrants' access to work or business opportunities. Interventions can target the policy environment of the host country or country of origin, migrants' human and social capital, financial mechanisms, or the private sector.

Figure 5 Focusing on existing migrant populations



3.1.1 Creating a supportive policy environment

First and foremost, access to work and business opportunities can be supported through the creation of supportive policy environments. Policy adjustments in host countries can be a critical first step to support further interventions, providing a strong foundation for facilitating migrants' contributions. There are numerous ways in which policy environments in host countries can be adjusted to allow migrants to fully participate in and contribute their skills to host countries, removing the social, political and economic barriers to their contributions. For example:

- Addressing specific barriers to migrants' labour market access – for example through addressing migrants' rights to work and through skills recognition (see Box 9).
- Facilitating legal rights for migrants to own businesses – as in the case of Turkey (see Box 10).

- Facilitating the regularisation of irregular migrants into the formal economy – as seen in the case of Colombia (see Box 10).⁸ While irregular migrants already make significant socioeconomic contributions, the absence of formal status may be one of the greatest obstacles to unlocking positive contributions.

Without such policy adjustment, businesses and other actors may consider it to be too high risk to engage with migrants with irregular status working in informal labour markets, disincentivising engagement or meaning that interventions exclude such groups. Importantly, any interventions seeking to create a supportive policy environment in host countries should take account of and be adjusted to mitigate for potential risks to opportunity access for host community members.

Beyond host countries, supportive policy environments can also be critical in countries of origin (see Box 11). Policy adjustments in

Box 9 Skills portability and recognition

Migrants' potential contributions to host economies can be supported through skills portability frameworks and agreements. Such agreements can be bilateral, multilateral or between national accrediting bodies. They are often part of wider mobility agreements. For example, Engineers Canada has made agreements to allow the mutual recognition of equivalent engineering qualifications with several other national bodies in France, Australia, Ireland, Hong Kong and some American states. Elsewhere, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and South Korea have worked with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to develop mutual recognition arrangements and regional competency standards for domestic workers and other common migrant occupations in Southeast Asia.

Recognising skills in different national contexts can be difficult. Many employers do not trust third party assessor programmes but also lack the capacity to test skills in house. However, successful strategies have been identified. For example, employers can use adaptation periods of supervised work as a method of assessing skills and prior learning (Sumption, 2013).

Skills recognition can also encompass interventions aiming to facilitate access to work for those who have received informal training and lack professional recognition. Frameworks which recognise prior learning rather than qualifications have been suggested in such instances, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) collecting country examples including proposals for electronic learning portfolios in several countries (Werquin 2010).

Sources: Werquin 2010; Sumption, 2013; ILO, 2018b; Engineers Canada, 2020

⁸ Regularisation and amnesty policies – which allow regularised migrants to work in the formal economy – have long been used in Europe, the United States and elsewhere to increase contributions and reduce the informal economy. While the literature on the socioeconomic benefits of regularisation is relatively limited, various case studies suggest significant positive benefits, both for migrants and the communities hosting them.

Box 10 In focus: mitigating risks from policy adjustments

Policy adjustments aiming to engage economically dormant or informally employed migrant populations for the benefit of all must anticipate and mitigate possible risks – in particular, the perceived impacts on host communities. Whether or not there are negative impacts, policymaking may be shaped by public concerns about potential impacts on opportunities within host communities (Rolfe, 2018).

There are various examples of practical measures that have been taken to mitigate such concerns. The case of Syrian refugees in Turkey provides one such example. Unlike many refugee-hosting countries, the Turkish government allows refugees to formally own businesses and enterprises. Between 2011 and 2016, Syrian refugees contributed \$334 million to Turkey's economy through more than 6,000 enterprises (Clemens et al., 2018). By stipulating a ratio of Turkish to non-Turkish workers (10 Turkish citizens for every 1 refugee), the Turkish government ensured that host communities also benefited from new enterprise, while also supporting the integration of different communities.

Good practice can also be found in Colombia, with the regularisation in 2018 of 440,000 undocumented Venezuelans. This enabled migrants to receive residency and work permits, while also creating significant benefits for the Colombian economy. Over 75% of Venezuelans were of working age and 83% were educated to secondary level; once regularised, Venezuelans increased their incomes, reduced their reliance on welfare, and state tax revenues increased. In this case, concerns about the unequal distribution of any perceived costs and benefits in border areas where migrants were concentrated were mitigated through cross-country voluntary distribution schemes, which distributed migrants across the country to spread the impacts and benefits.

Sources: Bahar et al., 2018; Mathews, 2018

Box 11 Supportive policy environments in countries of origin

Countries of origin can create supportive policy environments for migrants at their point of departure and on their return. In 2017, India introduced an 'emigration clearance' scheme which, prior to departure, aimed to protect migrants from exploitation, prepare them for international migration and enhance their skills. The programme focused initially on employment in construction, driving and domestic work and provided migrants with internationally recognised certificates, enabling departing migrant workers to move up the value chain.

In the context of return, in 2013 Ethiopia created the National Reintegration Directive, aiming to create a supportive policy environment for migrant reintegration, partially in response to large numbers of migrants returning from Saudi Arabia, many of whom were vulnerable. The ILO supported the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour to develop a programme which supported returnees with economic training in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, vocational skills and business development. The programme also placed returnees in waged employment through partnerships with the private sector

Source: Bhasakar, 2017; Wickramasekara, 2019

countries of origin may target departing migrants through the provision of pre-departure training and accreditation, enabling migrants to climb value chains in host countries. Alternatively, policy change may target returning migrants, aiming to facilitate a supportive environment for their successful reintegration.

3.1.2 Supporting migrants' human and social capital

In some cases, even with an enabling policy environment in place, migrants may remain unable to access or fully capitalise on opportunities due to skills gaps, language barriers, poor access to information about opportunities, or insufficient social networks.

A large group of interventions therefore foregrounds support to migrants' human capital, including through education, language and skills training programmes. Other interventions address gaps linked to migrants' wider social capital, including efforts to expand their networks and understanding of local business contexts (see Box 12).

3.1.3 Loans and micro-financing

In other cases, migrants may lack the financial capital to take up opportunities. Another set of interventions therefore focuses on loans and micro-financing, which may be applied in combination with wider training initiatives (see Box 13). While their engagement remains under-explored, the banking sector can play a key role to enable access to low-interest loans, as well as supporting access to wider financial services.

3.1.4 Private sector interventions

Finally, migrants' access to work and business opportunities can be supported through interventions that engage the private sector. These may focus on increasing private sector appetite to open opportunities to migrants, for example through work placements, training schemes, support to migrant enterprise, and the proactive recruitment of migrants. In Brazil, for example, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in partnership with the Government of the Netherlands, funded a series of workshops encouraging Brazilian businesses to

Box 12 Supporting human and social capital in the European Union, the United States and Australia

Since 2014 the EU's COSME project (Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)) has funded projects to increase the impact of migrant enterprise through specialised training and inductions into local business contexts.

In some cases, training may be paired with work placements. For example, CalWORKS in California ensures that migrants receive vocational training as a condition of placements to boost skills and employability. Elsewhere, Australia's Stepping Stones to Small Business programme addresses refugee women's social networks and has established links with the local business sector, providing specialised modules to increase awareness of the local business environment and other key skills.

Source: Fanjul et al., 2018

Box 13 Supporting women-owned businesses in Sweden

The Ester Foundation in Sweden supports women from non-European backgrounds to start businesses in the country. It offers financial support through a microcredit system alongside a training course to develop a bankable business plan. The mix of microcredit finance, training and support enables migrant women to develop strong business foundations in Sweden, boosting their own livelihoods and their contribution to the local community.

Source: European Commission, 2016

hire and provide additional support to vulnerable migrants in the country (IOM, 2019).

Efforts to engage the private sector should, however, be mindful of possible risks (see section 4.2), such as abusive practices and exploitation by employers. Fair recruitment practices can be a critical tool in mitigating any such risks.⁹

3.2 Maximising migrants' resources for development outcomes

A final path towards unlocking existing migrant populations' socioeconomic contributions is through interventions that aim to maximise the use of migrants' resources (financial and otherwise) for development outcomes. These interventions work on the assumption that migrants are already economically and socially engaged in host communities, but that more could be done to ensure that financial and skills gains are effectively channelled towards development outcomes. These programmes include activities to provide greater access to financial services, reduce remittance costs and maximise remittance impacts, as well as enabling diaspora investment.

3.2.1 Improving financial literacy and access to financial services

Various interventions attempt to maximise gains from migrants' socioeconomic contributions through improved financial literacy and access to financial services. These interventions can help to ensure that the financial resources migrants receive from engagement in host economies are more effectively channelled towards development gains in both host countries and countries of origin. Improving financial literacy and access to financial services allows migrants to use financial tools to save and invest in host communities, while also often sending larger remittances home. For example, providing identity cards to migrants can enable them to open bank accounts, creating a culture of formalised financial savings which can in turn increase migrant incomes (Rannveig Agunias and Newland, 2012).

3.2.2 Maximising remittances and diaspora investments

Migrant remittances dwarf global aid. In 2018, \$529 billion dollars was remitted to lower income countries (World Bank, 2019a), though forecasts for 2020 now predict a 20% drop in global remittances as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020).

As Box 14 outlines, a range of actors, including policymakers, NGOs and the private sector, can support the maximisation of remittances. Some interventions in this area focus on improving the efficiency of transfers – for example, by reducing remittance costs or facilitating migrants' access to competitive rates. Other interventions focus on how remittance funds are subsequently invested – both at the household level and in the wider community. There are various interventions designed to support the use of remittances in a way that is proactive, developmental and self-sustaining. Some focus on the household level – for example, by creating financial tools and supporting financial management to encourage investment and savings by receiving households (see Box 15).

Interventions may also engage civil society and the private sector to channel household remittances towards community development outcomes (see Box 16), sometimes working through mechanisms such as pooled funds in order to make more efficient use of collective resources. In doing so, interventions aim to address risks that remittance practices may exacerbate existing inequalities, as households with the available capital to send individuals abroad are most likely to reap the rewards, leaving poorer households worse off in terms of income inequality. Interventions seeking to channel diaspora remittances and investment towards broader community development are often locally specific and innovative, with many tackling issues such as education, food security and nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, utilities, or enterprise and access to decent work.

9 For an overview of promising fair recruitment measures, see Hagen-Zanker et al., 2017b: 9.

Box 14 Efficient remittance transfers through 'Directo a Mexico' and 'Saver Asia'

Some countries have cooperated to reduce the costs and risks of remittances. In 2003, the Banco de Mexico and the US Federal Reserve created an interbank mechanism, Directo a Mexico, which improved the efficiency of payments made by migrants between the two countries. The sender pays all fees and there are no deductions from payments for recipients. The payment is sent in US dollars and the agreement converts it to pesos based on a competitive 'interbank reference foreign exchange rate', determined and published daily by the Banco de Mexico. The scheme is one of the lowest-cost transaction fees on the market. The involvement of central banks mean that payments are secure and arrive promptly.

The efficiency of remittance transfers can also be maximised by providing migrants with better knowledge of available remittance options. In the ASEAN region the joint ILO, Canada and Australian project TRIANGLE supports migrants to maximise remittances through its Saver Asia programme. Saver Asia allows users to compare the costs of remittances across money transfer operators, allowing migrants to find the best available price. The service also includes wider benefits, connecting migrants with local support agencies in host countries and offering financial services, such as mobile wallets, micro credit and bank accounts; courses on insurance and financial literacy; and a budget calculator.

Source: Ranneveig Agunias and Newland, 2012; ILO, 2018a

Box 15 Savings and financial literacy in Nepal

Helvetas and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) have implemented projects to improve financial literacy among migrant-sending communities in Nepal. They aim to help ensure that remittances are mobilised as sustainable investments in countries of origin, increasing saving and loan access as opposed to remittance dependence.

As part of the project, the Nepalese Federation of Savings and Credit Unions, which represents more than 2,800 local credit unions and cooperatives in the country, facilitated local training modules in small groups, targeting remittance-receiving households. Each group meets weekly for seven months, with sessions run by local financial literacy facilitators who provide tailored tuition. One study found that 76% of participants increased their regular savings and 35% started saving in a second family member's name.

Source: Rosenberg, 2017

3.2.3 Supporting diaspora investment and skills transfer

Beyond household remittances, a broader range of interventions aim to support and encourage diaspora members to contribute their financial and non-financial resources to development outcomes in their countries of origin.

In particular, diaspora organisations can be a key intermediary. Diaspora organisations undertake a range of programmes aiming to encourage diaspora investment in countries of origin, finding that participants often have a personal stake in their country of origin's

development and remain permanently engaged (Opoku-Owusu, 2020). In some cases, diaspora organisations have supplemented financial investments with interventions aiming to encourage the use of diaspora skills in support of development outcomes (see Box 17). However, such non-financial investments are often overlooked in discussions around diaspora contributions. There is a need for further exploration of how different actors can provide support to facilitate longer-term skills contributions, with many programmes focusing more heavily on short-term opportunities.

Diaspora investment can also be successfully channelled towards development outcomes through state-led efforts to encourage diaspora investment in countries of origin. This includes diaspora bonds (see Box 18), which aim to engage diaspora members across the globe to invest in their country of origin. The schemes, which are generally organised at a national

level, sell bonds with a guaranteed rate of interest and often offer ‘patriotic discounts’ or better interest for citizens (Tavakoli et al., 2016). However, while bond schemes may attract buyers using a sense of belonging with the country of issue, they must also provide clear and trusted economic benefits to be commercially successful (Famoroti, 2017).

Box 16 Supporting community development through cooperatives in the Philippines

In the Philippines, some migrants and remittance-receiving families use cooperatives to invest in small enterprises in return for interest on remittance incomes. Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC) supports rural development in areas such as manufacturing, aquaculture, sustainable tourism, agriculture, retail and marketing. Filipino migrants and their families can invest in the cooperative, contributing to rural development and receiving a return on their investment.

As well as supporting investors in the Philippines, SIDC has launched investment programmes in agriculture for Filipinos abroad, with a focus on supporting women’s financial engagement. It partnered with the Filipino Women’s Council to provide 5,000 domestic migrant workers in Italy with financial education, of whom 1,000 subsequently invested in SIDC. The joint project also saw the development of the Egg Layer investment programme, which provides a guaranteed return of 6–7% on migrants’ savings. The project works with Metro Bank and Land Bank in Italy to reduce transaction charges (€1 per month).

SIDC also offers members in the Philippines access to a huge variety of financial services through its Koopinoy arm, including access to loans, financial literacy training, scholarships for education, insurance and remittance support.

Sources: Shen et al, 2010; Esteves and Khoudour-Castéras, 2011; Thomas, 2012; ILO, 2013; Koopinoy, 2019; Atikha, n.d.

Box 17 AFFORD African Business Centre

AFFORD (African Foundation for Development) is a diaspora organisation which works to expand financial development contributions while harnessing diaspora skills to support African development. AFFORD’s African business centre aims to create jobs and strengthen African businesses through diaspora engagement. The programme engages diaspora investment through a match funding system, also providing volunteer training, business development and support.

The business club has led to an investment of over £500,000 by diaspora members, matched by an investment of £1 million by AFFORD at an average 20:80 ratio across 30 projects. It has led to the creation of over 1,000 jobs in eight African countries. In Ethiopia it introduced a new sector to the Ethiopian economy, with the creation of a care business. The programme also helps to increase connections between UK-based diaspora members and African entrepreneurs, facilitating the sharing of experience and skills between Africa and the UK. AFFORD has helped 155 diaspora volunteers provide training to over 800 SMEs in Ghana and Sierra Leone, demonstrating the power of non-financial diaspora contributions.

Source: Opoku-Owusu, 2020

Box 18 Diaspora bonds in Israel, Ethiopia and Nigeria

Since 1951, Israel has used diaspora bonds to raise more than \$25 billion, issuing bonds annually and engaging its diaspora to support the country's development. Israel has reduced its 'patriotic discount' over time and the bonds are now widely traded among global investors. Similarly, Ethiopia has issued two sets of bonds to date to fund large-scale dam construction, although these failed to gain support. This was largely due to a lack of faith in the project operator to deliver a return on investment, and a lack of confidence in the government to act as a guarantor.

In 2017, Nigeria sold \$300 million of diaspora bonds to raise revenue for infrastructure projects. Although this is a small figure compared to the \$25 billion received by Nigeria annually in remittances, the initial take-up of bonds is encouraging. However, key obstacles include publicising the bonds and providing access to country of origin financial products while migrants are in host countries. For bonds to succeed, states need to access an engaged diaspora with a profitable and trusted scheme that can be easily bought abroad.

Source;; Coleman, 2016; Kazeem, 2017; Tavakoli et al., 2017; Nath, 2019

4 From theory to practice

While the benefits of migration for sustainable development are clear, much more can be done to extend these benefits through effective programmatic approaches. The framework presented here for supporting productive migration can be useful for practitioners and policymakers alike, providing a spectrum of interventions that can be deployed to maximise the socioeconomic benefits of migration for all, including communities and groups left furthest behind.

The examples presented in this paper illustrate interventions that can and have been used, in a range of countries, to facilitate such socioeconomic benefits, as well as the benefits, good practices and learning arising from various models. However, these examples are by no means exhaustive, nor are these models intended to provide entirely replicable solutions. No one type of intervention is necessarily the most effective and their outcomes will depend both on the context in question and the specific design of the intervention.

As many of these make clear, bringing these interventions into practice means balancing a number of opportunities, challenges and risks through careful design and innovation. Successful interventions should be informed by a detailed understanding of the country and community contexts where they are deployed. A number of common considerations can, however, be outlined, which are explored in further detail in this chapter alongside recommended next steps for practitioners.

4.1 Maximising opportunities, overcoming challenges

Existing practice makes clear that the potential for interventions to maximise opportunities and positive socioeconomic outcomes depends on a variety of factors, including:

- Existing policy frameworks.
- Political environments, including public narratives around migration.
- The nature of economies and labour market needs.
- Levels of engagement, collaboration and openness to innovation among key stakeholders – including participating and donor governments, the private sector and civil society.
- The characteristics of migrant and potential migrant populations (including skill profiles; human, social and financial capital; and vulnerabilities).

Existing practice also makes evident that successful interventions must overcome a number of challenges. An initial obstacle is the lack of reliable data on migration trends in many low- and middle-income countries, which can lead to imperfect solutions. It can prevent migration from being fully incorporated into development policy and programmes, a problem compounded by a lack of large-scale, evaluated evidence of ‘productive migration’ programmes.

Interventions must also overcome a tension between innovation and risk. Successful interventions are likely to require at least some degree of innovation, yet this may conflict with a low risk appetite (including possible financial, reputational and political risks) among

key stakeholders such as sending or receiving governments, institutional donors and the private sector. Many existing approaches have tried to overcome this challenge by beginning with pilots to test new approaches. However, development professionals have also noted the risk of a series of ‘eternal pilots’ which fail to deliver positive outcomes at scale.

Likewise, successful approaches must overcome the challenge of building trust, common understanding and coherent systems between diverse actors. Many of the examples presented in this paper show that successful interventions are marked by the involvement of a wide range of actors, from design through to implementation. This may include different ministries within host and sending governments, the private sector, institutional donors, and diaspora and civil society organisations. However, building successful working relationships between these actors is by no means an easy task, with engagement by different actors often reflecting divergent interests, incentives and success criteria. The dynamics between host and sending countries may be marked by unequal power relationships and mistrust. Within host or sending countries, approaches may differ between different levels of government (from national to local authorities) and across different ministries. Institutional structures and capacities may differ between different countries and actors, making it difficult to build coherent processes.

Programmes must also be carefully calibrated to avoid unintended negative consequences. This should include a focus on possible impacts for host communities. Although migration’s impacts are most often positive overall, where negative impacts exist – such as impacts on access to work or downward pressure on wages – they are most likely to affect those who are already in precarious employment and working in poor conditions. This includes those with the lowest levels of educational attainment and in low-skilled, low-waged jobs, risking entrenching

inequalities in host societies.¹⁰ Interventions should also be conscious of the risk of entrenching inequalities in communities of origin, including by ensuring that programmes support the development of migrants’ wider communities. Similarly, policymakers should be aware of the wider possible social impacts in communities of origin, such as family disruption, all of which require careful consideration and mitigation.¹¹

Interventions must also ensure that they do not result in risks to migrants themselves. It is widely recognised that international migrants are disproportionately concentrated in vulnerable employment, and are more likely to hold ‘3D’ jobs (those that are dirty, dangerous and difficult) or to lack key protections such as occupational health and safety and fundamental labour rights (Mallett, 2018; Hagen-Zanker et al., 2017b). When well-designed, productive migration interventions can in fact play a crucial role in supporting migrants’ resilience and reducing risks. For example, when interventions include the expansion or introduction of new migration pathways, this can reduce risks associated with irregularity and informal status. However, interventions should avoid introducing new risks – in particular, ensuring that interventions do not inadvertently encourage the growth of precarious work or exploitation. Furthermore, interventions should ensure that an increased focus on migrant populations’ socioeconomic contributions does not overshadow the importance of protecting migrants’ rights or the continued need for appropriate social protection, particularly for those who are vulnerable (Odero and Roop, 2018; Crawford and O’Callaghan, 2019). The interventions presented here are considered complementary to – and not a substitute for – interventions addressing migrants’ rights, assistance and social protection.

Finally, interventions must overcome a tendency to pay insufficient attention to gender. Academic discussion of the role of gender in migration, including the feminisation of migration (Constable, 2009) is now mainstream

10 For further exploration, see Ozden and Wagner, 2014; Edo, 2015; and Mallett, 2018.

11 For example, research in Southeast Asia has documented a ‘care crisis’ linked to migration for domestic work, creating disruption for children who are ‘left behind’ as parents migrate (Lam and Yeoh, 2019).

but a challenge remains in translating this knowledge into practice. Female migrants face a trade-off in migration decision-making; while the opportunities for work for women are often lower skilled and less regulated, opening them up to greater risks of exploitation and abuse, the potential benefits in terms of access to education, economic independence and autonomy are high (O’Neil et al., 2016). Well-designed interventions should include a consideration of gender as a key part of programme design and evaluation, both in term of gender-specific risks and women’s equal access to opportunities.¹²

4.2 Next steps for practitioners

This paper suggests five recommendations to overcome these challenges and better harness the potential of migration in support of sustainable development.¹³

Recommendation 1: Begin from an understanding of political economy

Current practice suggests that different countries, regions and actors are at different points in the process towards better harnessing migration to support positive social and economic outcomes, and in turn sustainable development. In some cases, large-scale initiatives are already in action and providing significant benefits, while in others promising pilots are underway or looking to be scaled up. Still, in many contexts the initial argument for better maximising migration’s benefits has not yet been made. In part, this reflects the differing political economies surrounding migration and related programmes across different scenarios. Successful interventions should start from a

realistic assessment of the current political space in relevant contexts, exploring what can already be done within these parameters while determining how, in the longer term, this space can be opened up such that a wider set of interventions can be enacted, based on an understanding of how political economy considerations affect migration reform.¹⁴

Opening up political space means building the argument behind targeted interventions, based on an understanding of the political economy in a given context. This can be supported by approaches that situate productive migration interventions and migrants’ socioeconomic contributions within discussions of wider labour market and societal needs, skills, sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda, rather than a strictly migration-focused perspective. This will be critical in future discussions around the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic; there is an opportunity to open up political space by placing migrants – and their contributions – within the frame of this discussion from the very beginning.

Recommendation 2: Develop foundations for success by addressing policy barriers from the start and building trust between different stakeholders

Investment is needed in building the foundations needed to support successful outcomes. Effective interventions require a facilitating policy environment that removes blockers to migrants’ socioeconomic contributions and instead enables them to flow more freely. Attention is needed not only to piloting and scaling-up new programmes but also to longer-term engagement to ensure

12 For example, the SDC has developed a framework of guiding questions to ensure gender-specific vulnerabilities are mitigated in migration and development projects. It recognises three key areas in which provisions for gender should particularly focus: the role of gender in the division of labour, in access to resources, and in participation in decision making (SDC, 2017).

13 While the full implications of the Covid-19 pandemic for global migration are yet to be fully understood, it will undoubtedly provide an additional consideration in the design of future programmatic and policy interventions in this area. While the recommendations presented here make reference to some key trends, at the time of writing it is too early to understand how strategies for supporting productive migration will need to be adapted in the longer-term in light of Covid-19.

14 ODI has recently examined the political economy drivers of migration reform in Morocco (Lowe et al., 2020).

that policy environments in host countries and countries of origin are well-calibrated to making the most of migrants' potential contributions.

Early investments should also include efforts to build trust and coherent engagement between the range of actors likely to be involved in successful interventions. This should include efforts to build trust and foster strong working relationships between key institutions within and across host and sending countries. Intermediaries, such as diaspora organisations, can play an important role, particularly where they are already trusted by key actors and can build bridges between them. Clear expectations and commitments between different actors are also critical – for example, the role of actors within countries of origin in pre-departure preparation, or the role of host country governments and private sector actors in ensuring commitment to the protection of migrant workers' rights.

Development agencies need to clearly define their role and ensure that they are making a contribution towards development outcomes, as opposed to being seen to be simply subsidising the private sector in host economies. However, there are many opportunities for adding value, including by acting as a broker between different actors to facilitate new partnerships; funding the growth of initiatives that may take time to become self-sustaining; or targeting investments in organisational capacity, institutions and processes in sending and host countries.

Recommendation 3: Where possible, build on what already exists

As the conversation on supporting 'migration for development' moves from theory to practice, programmatic interventions can build on a wealth of existing knowledge, experience and practice in the design of new interventions. While interventions will not be exactly replicable across contexts, common characteristics and modalities can be identified, as well as lessons learned.

Interventions can be particularly effective where they focus on how existing interventions could be scaled up, replicated and expanded.

For example, looking at adjustments that could be made to existing migration pathways or exploring how socioeconomic benefits can be maximised in existing migration corridors. Further action should build on effective models, including those illustrated in this working paper, particularly in areas where theory and practice are more advanced – for example, supporting diaspora contributions.

However, such efforts should also be conscious of the fact that existing practice does not cover all bases, and in these areas greater innovation is needed. For example, while this working paper foregrounds the importance of both social and economic benefits associated with migration, the literature provides many examples that focus more heavily on migrants' economic contributions. Interventions that seek to recognise and support the wider social benefits of migration should warrant greater attention.

Recommendation 4: Take outcomes as a starting point for design

The design of interventions should begin with the social and economic outcomes being targeted, as well as a clear theory of change for how the intervention in question will contribute towards achieving them. Interventions, processes and systems should be designed around outcomes, and strong monitoring and evaluation put into place to confirm whether the original aims are being achieved. For example, this may mean focusing on a productive and safe relationship between a worker and their employer, designing interventions to create an integrated chain of processes that facilitate this, and determining where additional interventions are needed or where flexibility is required. Equally, it may include focusing on targeted social outcomes, for example the empowerment of female migrants, and ensuring that interventions are designed with this goal in mind. While interventions will need to be designed with a detailed understanding of the constraints posed by the institutional arrangements and political economy of targeted contexts, a clear focus on outcomes can also help

to build an understanding of where these form a barrier to progress.¹⁵

Recommendation 5: Embed a focus on rights, inequalities and vulnerabilities

Finally, successful interventions should embed a focus on inequalities, rights and vulnerabilities, both to avoid unintended negative outcomes and to ensure that interventions are appropriately tailored to ‘leave no one behind’. Successful interventions should not only be designed to maximise opportunities *overall*, but also to maximise opportunities *for all* – so that benefits are distributed fairly and sustainably for migrants, host communities and countries of origin. This includes considering pre-existing vulnerabilities, inequalities, and social norms and marginalisation such as the risk of exploitation and insecure work, a lack of access to vital services, discrimination and persecution, poverty, and abuse. The Covid-19 pandemic has made

particularly visible the risks migrants may encounter in the process of contributing to host societies, while simultaneously underscoring the value of their contributions.

A focus on rights, inequalities and vulnerabilities can be supported by engaging with actors who have specific expertise in these areas, including relevant experts at development agencies, international organisations and civil society organisations in target countries. Specific provisions to be included in interventions could include social security, the inclusion of international standards in relevant agreements, and the monitoring of whether migrants’ rights are being fulfilled in practice.¹⁶ Such considerations should be part of the fundamental design of interventions and supported by targeted funding to ensure they are prioritised. They should also be a key focus for programmatic indicators and metrics for success which – alongside measures of national economic growth and other development outcomes – should monitor the inclusivity of opportunities and their impact on the lives of every affected community.

15 Proposals for outcomes-based migration interventions that avoid burdensome debt and allow migrants and service providers to prosper, and which are built on incentives rather than enforcement, have been discussed by the Centre for Global Development (Smith and Johnson, 2020).

16 A growing body of literature and interventions focuses on the cross-border portability of social security benefits (see Hagen-Zanker et al., 2017a; Holzmann and Wels, 2020).

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