



Partnerships in migration and development: Working cooperatively to manage the benefits and challenges of migration for development

Workshop Discussion Paper

The link between migration and development policies is complex given that transnational issues are involved, and the link reaches across different policy sectors and engages diverse stakeholders. Partnerships can bring together these different stakeholders and thus contribute to harnessing the potential of migration for development. This background paper first explains the significance of partnerships in addressing the migration and development nexus. Second, it offers some examples of partnerships in migration-development initiatives, thirdly it acknowledges the role of regional and multilateral partnerships and finally it raises some points for discussion.

1. The importance of partnerships in bridging migration and development

Partnerships are policy tools for both development and migration practitioners. Partnerships contribute to making the development process inclusive, by engaging different stakeholders, fostering exchange and cooperation, sharing financial resources and giving ownership of the process to those directly concerned.¹ The success of the notion also lies in the recognition that partnerships are a key governance tool used by local development practitioners and in the integration of private-public partnerships in local development policies. The European Commission has promoted the notion of partnership as a decentralized co-operation instrument for managing structural funds.

As far as migration management is concerned, partnerships are also recognized as instruments for responsibility sharing between countries involved in or affected by particular migratory movements.² The International Agenda for Migration Management developed through the Berne Initiative, is a tool governments can use in developing effective mechanisms for inter-state cooperation and reflects their views without being binding. Within the framework of this agenda, partnerships are recognized as a key tool for collaboration and attention is called to the need for further exploration of effective practices including: bilateral and regional agreements to facilitate migration management, equitable and effective burden and responsibility sharing, concerted actions with civil society through migrant associations and with the private sector.

The European Commission has recognized partnerships as a tool for inter-state cooperation on migration issues. This includes partnerships **among destination countries, between source and destination countries** and gathering **home, host and transit countries**.

¹ Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals stresses the importance of building a Global Partnership for Development. Accessible at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

² Regional Consultations, Berne Initiative, IOM resource Document (2004)



As the links between migration and development are increasingly recognized, many policy makers today acknowledge the importance of partnerships as useful devices for policy design and implementation in managing the positive and negative effects migration may have on development.³ Moreover, the concept of partnership recognizes that migrant associations and private corporations can be active stakeholders in development strategies.

However, building partnerships is a complex task, given that most issues at stake cut across different policy areas and involve differing interests. Partnerships may bring together governments of countries of origin and destination; local or regional authorities of countries of origin with those of destination; governments of countries of origin with their diasporas; governments of countries of destination and migrants associations and networks residing in the country; governments of both origin and destination with public bodies, such as hospitals and academia; with private actors such as recruitment agencies; with international organizations; with the financial sector including commercial banks, money transfer agencies, etc. and the list goes on. Given that many of the identified partnerships are recent, evaluation of the administrative and financial burdens they may create is limited. Finally, questions are raised concerning an uneven representation of interests of the partners, such as between sending and host governments, or between public and non-governmental actors.

This paper defines ‘partnerships’ broadly in terms of joint efforts or endeavours such as dialogues, agreements and collaborations established among public (national and sub-national authorities), inter-governmental (international agencies and organizations), private and non-governmental organizations, from host and home countries, with a declared objective to tackle migration and development concerns.

2. Partnerships for development: harnessing the potential of migration for development

This section provides an overview of partnerships by outlining examples which respond to the challenge of human capital circulation; facilitate and maximize the benefits of remittances and financial transfers; contribute to the integration of migrants and improve data collection and information management.

Partnerships addressing the challenge of human capital circulation

The departure of highly skilled migrants is often referred to as a loss for the country of origin, and as a benefit for the country of destination. Negative effects on the country of origin range from the loss of skilled manpower, to the loss of return on the investment made by the country of origin in training and educating its nationals. This is particularly acute in sectors such as healthcare and education, which are directly linked to a country’s development. However,

³ For example, the Dutch Government’s Policy Memorandum on Development and Migration, stresses the importance of dialogue with partner countries and their migrants’ organisations within the context of an ‘integrated policy’ towards countries of origin. Netherlands House of Representatives (2004). Similarly, the UK House of Commons Report on Migration and Development suggests increased cooperation by the government, the private sector and NGOs with diasporas organizations. UK House of Commons Development Committee (2004), pp. 67/68.



countries of origin can also benefit from skilled labour emigration through the transfer of knowledge, skills and experience, and access to new technologies and markets through connections with their migrant communities. As this does not happen naturally, the positive effects of 'brain circulation' depend both on the linkages migrants establish and maintain with their home countries and on their status in the host country. Partnerships can be instrumental in making 'brain circulation' beneficial for migrants, home and host countries.

Bilateral partnerships between governments of countries of origin and destination, such as reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and South Africa which sets the terms for temporary migration of health workers to fill gaps in the UK labour market and provides opportunities for potential migrants to acquire skills that would benefit their home country upon return, can be crucial in reversing the 'brain drain'. However, bilateral agreements might divert the issue to countries not party to an agreement, causing skills shortages, as well as redirecting migrant streams towards this area.⁴ Moreover, the increase in numbers of Memoranda does not necessarily translate into their effective implementation.

Partnerships between governments of origin and destination countries, international organisations and migrants' associations/diasporas can help in making temporary returns work against 'brain drain'. In assisting governments, international organizations such as IOM can play a role in promoting skills and knowledge transfers of diasporas to their countries of origin through programmes such as Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA).⁵ IOM's experience of temporary return programmes shows that migrant associations play a central role in helping to identify and contact the appropriate professionals.

Innovative types of partnerships to manage labour migration such as, for example, between governments and recruitment agencies could help improve temporary migration schemes. The regulation of recruitment agencies, which have a role to play in ensuring transparent processes and migrants' rights in the workplace, and ensuring that temporary migration schemes function, could be one way of addressing 'brain drain'.⁶

Partnerships to maximise the benefits of remittances for development

Remittances transferred by migrants from their host to home countries are recognised as contributions to development. However, the process of remittance transfer may be cumbersome and expensive for many migrants, who opt to send their private funds home through informal channels. The question is how to facilitate remittance transfers and channel these funds towards development in a most effective way. Given the large number of stakeholders, including many non-governmental actors such as commercial banks, financial institutions, micro-finance

⁴ UK House of Commons Development Committee (2004), p. 31

⁵ This programme involves the temporary or permanent transfer of vital resources and skills to support the development of countries of origin. For example, the Ethiopian North American Health Professionals Association (ENAHPA) is a partner for the IOM project MIDA Ethiopia. Through IOM MIDA, a bilateral programme between Senegal and Italy has been established to mobilize and engage Senegalese diasporas in local private development.

⁶ House of Commons International Development Committee (2004), pp. 44/45.



organizations, credit unions, social funds, co-operatives and post offices in this process, partnerships can help to manage the positive impact of remittances.

Tri-partite partnerships between destination countries, countries of origin and financial institutions such as commercial banks and money transfer agencies can help to remove barriers and have a positive impact on legal, regulatory and policy frameworks. By attracting the interest of financial actors in the migrants' remittances market, such partnerships may have an impact on services available, by, for example, extending the availability of ATM machines and accessibility of micro-finance services.⁷ In turn, this can change economic behaviours of migrants in both host and home communities.

In partnerships with diasporas organisations, migrant-sending countries can make available incentives to encourage overseas transfers to countries of origin. Such collaboration could involve identifying investment projects, providing business investment information to members of the diasporas community, facilitating administrative and tax procedures through community projects involving hometown associations, or matching funds. One example, the Mexican "three for one" initiative in the state of Guanajato, matches each dollar transferred with the same amount from the municipality, the state, and the federal government.⁸

Partnerships between home countries, host countries and private and public development agents (national, international and local development agencies, business services, cooperatives, social investments funds, social enterprises etc.) can channel remittances transfers towards well-identified investments projects. The initiative « Unidos por la Solidaridad » in El Salvador directs migrant community funds in local projects through a governmental Social Investment Fund for Development, in partnership with local authorities and supported by the governmental institution in charge of communities abroad⁹.

Support of international institutions to existing non-governmental and governmental programs, such as from the Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), sustains the lowering of transfer costs and mobilization of savings in migrant communities and connects remittances with Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) development.¹⁰

Partnerships for the integration of migrants

To live a decent life, protection and access to language training, employment, education, healthcare and housing are vital for migrants. Relevant government departments in the host

⁷ The bilateral agreement between Mexico and the US is an example of successful agreements with banks and wire transfer agencies.

⁸ Johnson B., S. Santiago (2004)

⁹ Guía Oficial para salvadoreños en el exterior <http://www.elsalvador.com/especiales/2003/guiaoficial/index.html>

¹⁰ The IADB has also contributed to a number of projects and partnerships (in Brazil with *Banco Sudameris de Investimento*, in Ecuador with *Banco Solidario*) that link remittances inflows with entrepreneurial activities.



country, such as labour, employment or foreign affairs ministries, can have a pivotal role in the protection of migrants' welfare and rights. By reaching out to diasporas, these agents can advance the integration and participation of diasporas in their host societies. In turn, the **integration of migrants may foster partnerships**, as evidence continues to correlate the well being of migrants with their capacity to develop productive activities and relationships between their host and home countries.

Partnerships between actors from the private sector and migrants' organisations have raised the level of public interest in new initiatives building on the positive effects of ethnic diversity, such as, partnerships with companies developing 'migrant-friendly' corporate policies and responsible practices.¹¹

Improving data collection and research

Partnerships to improve mechanisms for data collection and exchanges of effective practices would benefit both migration and development practitioners. Exchange of information between countries of origin and countries of destination, as well as regional and international cooperation in sharing data and knowledge on specific issues of common concern, are essential types of partnerships.

As many countries have **national** information sources, such as consulates and relevant ministries, and/or population censuses, targeted information exchanges between states could help improve knowledge on migration and development. Finally, information exists from **international** organizations such as the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and IOM, as well as data sets on migration from EUROSTAT and the United Nations Population Division, and statistics on development from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

Partnerships among these different actors can provide accurate information on migrants and diasporas, as well as on their contributions to trade, investments, business creation and remittances transfers.

3. Partnerships at the regional or global levels

Given that most international migration takes place between countries within the same region, regional processes and international fora are significant arenas of discussion and partnership building on migration, as host and home countries meet together.

¹¹ Business for Social Responsibility, "Migrant Labor", accessible at www.bsr.org



Economic groupings such as New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Commonwealth Business Council launched *Africarecruit*, which facilitates recruitment in Africa and acts as a platform for debate with the African diaspora on how to add value to capacity building in Africa.¹²

Furthermore, migration and development are among the key themes in regional consultative processes, such as the Regional Conference on Migration (Puebla Process) and the South American Conference on Migration (Lima Process). The inter-regional Dialogue on Migration in Western Mediterranean Ministerial (5+5) has included migration and co-development, such as the role of diasporas, labour migration, integration of migrants, as well as local cooperation on its agenda.¹³

4. Points for discussion

- *What are some lessons learned and effective practices of partnerships in migration and development and among which stakeholders?*
- *How can information, data and statistics concerning migration and development be compiled and processed in a coherent manner? What are effective practices, useful mechanisms and adequate fora for exchanging information?*
- *What role can partners play in developing policy? How can partners be included in policy development?*
- *How can mutual trust and the will to cooperate be fostered between potential partners?*
- *Should government/ private sector partnerships be encouraged? If so, how can governments encourage the involvement of such partners?*

¹² Accessible at <http://www.africarecruit.com/>

¹³ Participating countries are Algeria, France, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia. The Ministerial conferences were held in Tunis (2002), Rabat (2003), and Algiers (2004).



IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

Workshop on Migration and Development
Mainstreaming Migration into Development Policy Agendas
2-3 February 2005, Geneva

References:

House of Commons International Development Committee

2004 *Migration and Development: How to make migration work for poverty reduction*, Sixth Report of Session 2003-2004, Volume 1., London

IOM

2004 The Berne Initiative, *Regional Consultations Resource Document, towards the development of an International Agenda for Migration Management*

Johnson B. and S. Santiago

2004 *Diasporas, Emigrés and Development: Economic linkages and programmatic responses*, A Special Study of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Washington DC.

Netherlands House of Representatives

2004 AVT04/BZ76203 *Policy Memorandum – Development and Migration*, July 2004 – unofficial translation from the Dutch original text.