

WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2013

MIGRANT WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Rationale

Q 1: Why focus on well-being? How is this related to development?

Migration is still not adequately integrated into development frameworks:

- The *World Migration Report 2013* is published amidst a growing debate on how the benefits of migration can best be harnessed for development. Despite progress following the first United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) in 2006, migration remains inadequately integrated into development frameworks at national and local levels, and public perceptions of migrants and migration are often very negative.

The WMR 2013 offers a novel approach to analyse migration and development:

- Studies on migration and development tend to focus on migration's contribution to economic development and, in particular, on the impact of remittances on migrant-sending countries in the South. In contrast, the WMR 2013 looks at how migration impacts the human development outcomes of individuals, presenting a more holistic picture of development.

There is a need for new methods of measuring development progress:

- The WMR's enquiry takes place within the context of a growing interest among policymakers and scholars in measuring the happiness and well-being of populations. The global economic crisis and the challenge of maintaining economic stability have highlighted the need for more sustainable ways of living. In addition, emerging evidence from academia suggests that **economic wealth does not necessarily generate well-being among the population**, affirming popular notions that 'money does not buy happiness'. Initiatives – such as France's Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, led by Joseph E. Stiglitz and Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi – have recognized the limitations of measuring societal progress and development in terms of economic measures such as gross national product (GNP) or GDP, and made the case for the collection of a wider set of well-being indicators to assess whether economies were serving the needs of society.

The need for new methods of measuring development progress is also recognized by the United Nations, which calls for a more holistic approach to development, arguing that the notion of well-being and sustainability should be at the core of the post-2015 goals and indicators (UN DESA, 2012).

Q 2: How does the WMR 2013 contribute to international dialogues on migration and development?

The WMR 2013 contributes to dialogue on migration and development and to the post-2015 development agenda:

- The WMR 2013 is a contribution to the second United Nations High-level Dialogue (HLD) on International Migration and Development to be held in 2013, and to discussions on the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda, which will follow the MDGs framework. In addition to a focus on well-being, the WMR 2013 contributes to the debate on migration and development in other ways:
 - Namely, the Report draws upon the findings of a **unique source of data – the Gallup World Poll**, conducted in more than 150 countries – allowing for an assessment of the well-being of migrants **worldwide** for the first time.
 - Secondly, the report looks at how migrants' life conditions differ depending on the origin and destination of migrants. Traditionally, research has focused on those migrating from lower income countries to more affluent ones; this report **expands the analysis, considering movements along four migration pathways** and their implications for development: i.e. migration from the South to North, between countries of the South or between countries of the North, as well as movements from the North to the South.

Key Concepts

Q 3: What is well-being?

Well-being is a multi-faceted concept that is increasingly relevant to governments and policymakers:

- The concept of well-being has received increasing attention from governments, academics and policymakers in recent years. While there exists no one conceptualization of well-being that is accepted above all others, in a broad sense well-being refers to the life experience of individuals and their internal sense of how their lives are going. Well-being is constructed through the interaction between an individual's circumstances, activities and psychological resources.

An individual's overall well-being is composed of various dimensions:

- The WMR 2013 uses the definition of well-being developed by Gallup. Gallup scientists have identified several main contributors to a person's overall Subjective well-being: Financial well-being, including indicators like income and the fulfilment of basic needs; Career well-being, including, among others, employment rates and career satisfaction; Physical well-being, including indicators such as personal health and access to health-care services; Community well-being measuring areas like relations within communities of residence, satisfaction with community and safety; and Social well-being, including indicators on social relations and informal support networks. Because these elements are interdependent, they must be considered together to reveal a complete picture of well-being.

There is a need for more research on the well-being of migrants:

- Although a significant amount of research is beginning to emerge on well-being, very little has looked at the well-being of migrants; the WMR 2013 is the first study to address migrant well-being on a global scale.

Q 4: What is the difference between well-being and happiness?

It is easy to confuse the terms 'happiness' and 'well-being', in part because the term well-being is not consistently defined. To some academics and policymakers, well-being is understood to mean quality of life, living standards, or human development, while others use happiness and well-being interchangeably. **In fact, well-being is a much broader concept, of which happiness forms an important component.** For instance, in this report, an individual's well-being is understood to encompass outcomes relating to career, personal finances, health and social life, among others. Outcomes on these various more objective measures of well-being are important for happiness, but happiness alone cannot be a full measure of an individual's well-being. Thus, the terms are related but not identical.

Q 5: Are certain aspects of well-being more important than others? What areas should take priority?

Some areas of well-being may take priority depending on the development context of countries or regions:

- While all areas of well-being are important, various aspects may take on **differing significance depending on the specific challenges of a region, country or community.** For instance, some have argued that in areas of dire poverty, subjective measures of well-being are less important than objective indicators such as, for example, income, poverty, health and employment. Thus, for the world's poorest people, for whom survival cannot be taken for granted, happiness and subjective well-being are seen as secondary to more fundamental development concerns such as food security and the prevention of disease. This argument loosely follows the reasoning of twentieth century psychologist Abraham Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' theory, whereby people must first meet their basic survival needs before pursuing other 'higher' needs, including fulfilment of psychological needs (for example, belonging, love and esteem) and the ultimate aim of 'self-actualization' – achieving one's full potential and purpose.

Some areas of well-being are more appropriately addressed by policy than others:

- The areas of well-being that receive the greatest attention may simply be the ones that are considered to be amenable to policy intervention. For instance, it is hard to increase happiness or social well-being through policy changes, but areas such as health and safety are more effectively dealt with by government interventions.

Aspects of well-being are mutually reinforcing:

- This being said, all aspects of well-being are mutually reinforcing (although we do not know much about the direction of causation). For example, obtaining a higher paying and more fulfilling job can not only improve financial well-being, but also subjective well-being, and perhaps allow this individual to give back more to his or her community or to move to an area that is more desirable, thus improving community well-being. Better health will allow someone to remain employed or to be more productive, in turn contributing to the individual's personal financial well-being as well as the local economy. Research has suggested happier people may have stronger immune systems, may be more helpful at work and skip work less often, may do better in social relationships, and various other benefits.

Thus, the area of well-being which receives priority of attention may depend on the needs of the society; the resources of institutions and government; and the receptiveness of one area of well-being over another to policy intervention.

Q 6: What is the Gallup World Poll?

Gallup conducts surveys in more than 150 countries around the world:

- Gallup is a U.S.-based company with more than 75 years of experience in social sciences research. The company employs roughly 2,000 professionals in nearly 40 offices around the world. Since 2005, Gallup has conducted its World Poll, which continually surveys adults in more than 150 countries, representing more than 98 per cent of the world's total adult population. Gallup's World Poll samples are randomly selected and nationally representative.

The Gallup World Poll can be used to better understand the lives of migrants:

- While the World Poll is not specifically designed to study migrants, Gallup asks all respondents if they were born in the country in which they currently reside, and if not, where they were born. Using this information, it is possible to distinguish migrants (newcomers with less than five years living in the host country; and long-timers who have lived in the host country for five or more years) from the native-born population. Because Gallup annually asks the same questions, in the same way, in more than 150 countries, territories and regions (representing 98% of the world's total adult population), it possible to compare data on migrants across multiple nations, regions and time. The WMR is based on data collected from the 2009, 2010 and 2011 rounds of the World Poll and includes data on nearly half a million adults, including roughly 25,000 first-generation migrants and 441,000 native-born residents.

Q 7: What are the global North and South?

'North' and 'South' are used to distinguish countries according to development levels:

- The 'North–South' divide is a way of distinguishing more developed countries from less developed ones, and became commonly used following the end of the Cold War. To date, there is no agreement on how best to categorize countries into 'North' and 'South'; The WMR 2013 considers three prominent methods: that used by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and the World Bank.

- UN DESA groups countries into developing and developed regions, with ‘North’ including Northern America¹, Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand;
- UNDP groups countries based on their Human Development Index (HDI);
- The World Bank bases its divisions on gross national income (GNI) per capita.

Key borderline countries that are grouped differently into North and South depending on which definition is used include the Russian Federation and transition economies in Eastern Europe, some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (such as Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates), some of the emerging Asian economies (such as Hong Kong, China; the Republic of Korea; and Singapore) and countries and territories in the Caribbean (such as Barbados; Bermuda; Puerto Rico; and Trinidad and Tobago).

The WMR 2013 uses the World Bank definition of North and South

- **The decision of which method of classification to use is often dependent on the focus of the analysis.** For instance, in international trade statistics, Israel and the Southern Africa Custom Union are considered as developed countries, or when looking at technological know-how several Asian economies are an integral part of the North. Consequently, one could say that North and South do not exist as such but are only artificial constructions aiming at representing the current global situation with regard to a specific dimension of development. When trying to group countries together from a migration and development perspective, it is useful to look at the driving forces behind human mobility – one of the most prevalent being the search for better job opportunities. In majority, labour migrants move to countries with higher wage levels, i.e. countries with higher per capita incomes.² For this reason – after a brief comparison of the three methods mentioned above – **the WMR 2013 adopts the World Bank’s method of classification as it is most closely linked with income.** Furthermore, it is adjusted each year to remain current.

The ‘North’ refers to ‘high-income’ countries:

- The North includes all ‘high-income’ countries, as classified by the World Bank – those that had a GNI per capita of USD 12,276 or more in 2010.

The ‘South’ refers to all other countries:

- The ‘South’ refers to upper-middle-income, lower-middle-income and low-income countries, as classified by the World Bank. In this report, low- and middle-income countries refer to all economies that had a GNI per capita of USD 12,275 or less in 2010.

‘North’ and ‘South’ do not necessarily reflect a country’s geographical position:

- It is important to remember that a country’s geographical position is not a criterion for classifying it as North or South. At times, this can lead to confusion; for instance, many countries in the ‘North’ may actually be situated in the geographical south and vice versa (as, for example, Australia).

Q 8: Why have four pathways of migration been used as a means of analysis?

Much research focuses on South–North migration; the four pathways approach provides a more comprehensive picture:

- Over the last decade, numerous reports and studies have been published on the linkages between migration and development. Typically, the migration and development policy discourse and related studies focus on the implications of migration for development when a person moves from South to North. This skews the policy

¹ This does not include Mexico.

² Some research shows that migrants between developing countries seem to be even more attracted by the possibility of getting a job rather than by high wage differentials (Gagnon et al., 2012). Thus, emerging economies recording high growth rates might be more attractive than high-income but stagnant economies.

debate and draws attention away from other migration flows that merit equal attention. In fact, less than half of all international migrants move from South to North, and almost as many move between countries of the South. By looking at migration along all ‘four pathways of migration’, **the WMR 2013 aims to present a more precise and comprehensive overview of the well-being of migrants in different parts of the world.**

The four pathways approach offers a different perspective on migration and development than more traditional analyses looking at regional and interregional dynamics:

- Because much migration is motivated by the search for better employment and incomes, for investigations looking at migration and development it may be more useful to divide countries based on income (namely, into North and South) than into regional blocks; however each method has its advantages and disadvantages.

The four pathways approach has several limitations:

- Firstly, although there are common characteristics in each of the four pathways, the context in which migration occurs is extremely varied and **each pathway also encompasses a range of different migrant situations and categories.**
- Secondly, while each of the four migration flows is described as a stand-alone scenario, it is clear that each one forms part of the global migration system and is **closely interlinked** with the others (for example, restrictive migration policies in the North can lead to increased irregular South–North flows but also to an increase of South–South movements). Thus, it is important to remember possible interrelationships, even when looking at each migration pathway as a distinct scenario.

Methodology

Q 9: Where do the data for the WMR come from?

The data for the WMR 2013 come from several sources:

- Chapter 2, which outlines the current situation of global migration on the four migration pathways (namely migration that moves from South to South; South to North; North to South; and North to North), is largely based on IOM analysis of data from the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (**UN DESA**), in particular, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin* (2012).
- Other sources of data are from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**) for data on refugees; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) for data on international students; and the **World Bank** for data on remittances. Additional sources are drawn on as needed.

Data on well-being are from the Gallup World Poll:

- **Chapter 4 is the result of collaboration with the Gallup World Poll**, which has provided both data and analysis to better understand the well-being of migrants around the world. These data were collected between 2009 and 2011, and are **based on a survey of nearly half a million adults, including roughly 25,000 first-generation migrants and 442,000 native-born residents.**

Despite the value of Gallup’s global sample, limitations exist:

- Gallup’s migrant sample population includes regular and irregular migrants, but does not distinguish further between them or isolate subcategories of migrants, such as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors, refugees or stranded migrants. The Gallup sample does not identify return migrants; it excludes migrants who may reside in group situations such as refugee camps; and it excludes non-Arab expatriates in Gulf Cooperation Council countries.
- Additionally, because Gallup conducts interviews in each country’s most common languages, migrants who do not speak the languages used for the surveys in each country may be under-represented.

Q 10: How is well-being measured?

Measuring well-being is challenging and various approaches exist:

- Well-being is challenging to measure as it involves both the objective conditions of an individual's life as well as the subjective experience of these conditions. What may be a good job, salary or housing situation for one person may be unsatisfactory for another, and so on. Methods to measure and quantify well-being are still relatively new and there is no standard approach.

Well-being is often investigated by breaking the concept down into its various dimensions:

- For the WMR 2013, these dimensions are Financial well-being, Career well-being, Physical well-being, Community well-being, Social well-being, and Subjective well-being.

Both people's personal evaluations of their lives, as well as data on objective indicators can be useful for measuring well-being:

- Well-being may be assessed by asking people to evaluate various aspects of their lives, such as job satisfaction, personal relationships and community attachment. It can also be measured through the collection and verification of objective data such as employment rates, salary levels, life expectancy and housing conditions. Using the Gallup World Poll, over 450,000 individuals around the world (including more than 440,000 native-born residents and nearly 25,000 first-generation migrants) were asked questions about their financial situation, jobs, housing, safety, and so on. Thus, the WMR 2013's exploration of well-being uses data that are based on individuals' evaluations of their objective conditions – for example, do they feel safe at night, or do they earn enough to live comfortably. This method is important because it captures people's well-being as they actually experience it, recognizing that there may be a discrepancy between objective indicators – particularly macroeconomic indicators – and the real-life experience of ordinary people.

There is growing recognition that understanding people's subjective experiences of their lives is important for measuring human progress:

In its 2011 report, *How's life? Measuring well-being*, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) referred to the discrepancy between macroeconomic indicators and the real-life experience of ordinary people:

In recent years, concerns have emerged regarding the fact that macro-economic statistics, such as GDP, did not portray the right image of what ordinary people perceived about the state of their own socioeconomic conditions... Addressing such perceptions of the citizens is of crucial importance for the credibility and accountability of public policies but also for the very functioning of democracy (OECD, 2011).

Gallup uses two primary forms of analysis to better understand the well-being of migrants:

- Compares the self-reported well-being of migrants and the well-being of the native-born in the country of residence;
- Compares the self-reported well-being of migrants in their country of residence and that of 'matched stayers' who never migrated and remain in origin countries.

Q 11: What are the dimensions of well-being in the WMR 2013?

Subjective well-being

Generally speaking, subjective well-being refers to **how people evaluate their lives**, or how people think their lives are going. Subjective well-being can be divided into two aspects: experiential (relating to individuals' momentary affective states or emotions) and evaluative (relating to individuals' memories/assessments of feelings/thoughts about their past and their future).

Financial well-being

Financial well-being refers to well-being in the context of **personal finances and satisfaction with living standards**. Gallup assesses individuals' personal economic situations and the situations of the communities in which they live by asking a series of questions relating to income and the ability to live on that income.

Career well-being

Career well-being refers to **well-being in the context of career and employment**. To assess levels of career well-being, Gallup examines, inter alia, individuals' employment status, their views about their own job situation, and their perceptions of opportunities for entrepreneurship, including the potential obstacles to setting up a business.

Social well-being

Social well-being refers to well-being in the context of **personal relationships and social networks**. Gallup assesses social well-being by asking about migrants' social support structures and opportunities to make friends in the city or area where they live.

Community well-being

Community well-being refers to **the quality of an individual's relationship with the community in which he or she lives**. Gallup gauges community well-being by measuring, inter alia, people's perceptions of their personal safety, their confidence in national institutions, their views on the prevalence of corruption in business and government, and their degree of community attachment.

Physical well-being

Physical well-being refers to the **quality of an individual's personal health**. Physical well-being is also seen to be affected by individuals' access to good-quality health care and the likelihood of their having health or medical insurance.

Q 12: The WMR mainly compares migrants with native-born in host countries. But how do we know if migrants' life situation improved by migrating abroad?

An important question is whether or not migration has a positive impact on the lives of migrants:

- Measuring well-being, and particularly well-being over time, is a difficult task. While comparing migrants with native-born in the host country is useful, it does not allow the researcher to see the effect that the process of migration has had on a migrant's life. While we may learn that a migrant has a lower income than a native-born or that he or she has higher levels of happiness, we do not know if these outcomes are influenced by migration and whether they were different prior to leaving the origin country. Thus the central question remains unaddressed: **Has migration made the migrant better off?**

It is difficult to compare the well-being of migrants before and after migration:

- Unfortunately, **there is a lack of longitudinal data on various indicators of migrant well-being** – that is, data collected at several points in time on the same individuals. For migrants, this would mean collecting data before and after migration takes place. Surveys that involve returning to the same individuals (namely, panel data, usually collected at a quarterly or annual interval) often form part of national endeavours and are usually inadequate in terms of capturing data on immigrants pre and post migration. Nor is this information collected by countries of origin, despite increasing attempts to collect information about household members living abroad. Most existing analyses of migrant living and working conditions and other well-being indicators are therefore limited to cross-sectional comparisons of different individuals at one point in time – for example, comparing immigrants to native-born or migrants to 'stayers' – people in origin countries who did not migrate.

In the WMR 2013, Gallup is able to estimate what migrants' lives would have been like had they not migrated:

- In the WMR 2013, in addition to comparisons between migrants and native-born in destination countries, **the Gallup World Poll estimates what migrants have gained and lost by migrating abroad.** Using a statistical model that compares the lives of migrants with the lives of people with the same age, sex and education profile in their country of birth ('matched stayers'), it is possible to estimate what migrants' lives hypothetically would have been like had they stayed at home. Of course, this model also has weaknesses, largely because it is still not measuring the same individuals over time. However, it does provide an indication of how migration itself influences well-being.

Future initiative and additional resources

Q 13: What future steps can be taken to gain greater knowledge of migrant well-being?

For a greater understanding of the implications of migration for human development, **better indicators of migrant well-being and additional research are needed.** Existing international migration data currently tell us very little about the well-being of migrants, and whether human development outcomes for migrants are improving or not.

The WMR 2013 presents an introduction to migrant well-being:

- The WMR 2013's analysis of migrant well-being provides a sample of what Gallup has learned from national surveys around the world. By adding new questions to the existing survey, or by increasing the sample of migrants in certain countries, much more could be learned about the well-being of migrants worldwide. It would be possible, using the Gallup World Poll, to develop an ongoing 'Global Migration Barometer' survey to regularly monitor changes in the well-being of migrants across the globe.

There is a need for more detailed analyses investigating well-being at regional and country levels, as well as among different categories of migrants:

- The well-being outcomes of migration are greatly affected by the conditions under which people move, but the broad scope of this report has not allowed for more in-depth research into how migrant well-being varies within certain countries or regions. Nor has it been possible to explore in detail the effect of migration on the well-being of different migrant categories, such as labour migrants, students, irregular migrants, trafficked persons, return migrants, or migrants stranded due to conflict situations or environmental disasters.

IOM and Gallup hope to continue pursuing new avenues of migrant-related research:

- Leveraging its established network of global resources, IOM and Gallup can conduct more focused studies with different migrant categories. Gallup data can offer clues to help policymakers maximize the relationship between migration and development on both sides, by further studying migrants' working conditions, by assessing migrants' levels of civic engagement and community attachment, and so on. Gallup also has the research capabilities in major countries of origin to investigate additional microdata-based policy indicators, such as changes in the physical, financial, career, community and social aspects of well-being in households with migrants who are currently abroad – for example, comparing the situation before and after a migrant has left; how remittances are being spent and whether money earned is actually aiding development; and the skills, knowledge and experiences that returning migrants bring back home.

Q 14: How can I find out more about the well-being of migrants?

- Full report, chapters and overview;
- WMR 2013 Working Papers providing regional perspectives;
- Presentations of WMR 2013 Seminars on the theme of migrant well-being and development
- Useful reference materials: Factsheet, Press release, etc.

All information can be downloaded for free at: www.iom.int/cms/wmr2013