Focus on: The Arab Spring: Reflections on the international response one year later

The Arab Spring brings into sharp focus the complexity of migration crisis response. The rapid onset of multiple crises, ranging from mass protests to conflict situations and civil war, demonstrates the need for international actors to provide quick and flexible services when national governments are overwhelmed or cease to effectively function. Such interventions are lifesaving, but they challenge the traditional architecture of humanitarian assistance.

During the Libya crisis, more than 790,000 migrant workers and their families exited the country to escape the conflict. A total of 120 different nationalities were represented and 46 governments requested IOM assistance to evacuate 81,654 individuals. The response highlights the needs and vulnerabilities of a wider range of persons who cannot be categorized as refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs).
Expanding transportation networks and the prevalence of South–South migration mean that migrants-caught-in-crisis will likely be a growing demographic. If recent crises are an indication, humanitarian actors will have to manage increasingly diverse populations, negotiate between state and non-state actors, and carefully consider the reintegration of migrants in their countries of origin to avoid further instability. These are among the challenges that IOM confronts.

Recent IOM publications reflect on the Organization’s response to migrant outflows resulting from the Arab Spring. They provide information about IOM’s activities, relevant statistics and policy recommendations. One of IOM’s seminal publications for 2012, *Migrants Caught in Crisis: The IOM Experience in Libya*, analyses the effect of the Libyan crisis on migrants and evacuees, and evaluates the international response. More specifically, it looks at the role of state actors, the effectiveness of cooperation mechanisms, evacuation as a form of protection and the difficulties humanitarian agencies face in gaining access and mobilizing resources. The report places the IOM experience in Libya in the context of wider humanitarian issues, such as the impact of returning migrants on their countries of origin.

The massive population outflow from Libya was a relatively short-term crisis, but as a result, many surrounding countries have had to reintegrate returned migrants, a process that will have long-lasting effects. *Returnees from Libya: The Bittersweet Experience of Coming Home* analyses the situation of migrants who returned to several West African countries following the conflict in Libya. The *Policy in Brief* report evaluates both the needs of migrants and the context to which they are returning. To provide the necessary background, it explores the factors underlying migration to Libya, the typical migrant’s journey and his/her efforts to make a new life. As the crisis began, many migrant workers were forced to make a hasty return home. The brief draws on several assessments carried out by IOM (in Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana (with the United Nations Development Programme), Mali, Niger and Senegal) at the height of the crisis. It provides a unique perspective on the thoughts of returnees, their families and their communities, and the challenges of reintegration. The brief is the basis of a forthcoming report on migrants from Libya and develops recommendations for reintegration and community stabilization, migration management, capacity-building and sustainable development.

Given the scale and complexity of international response to these events, IOM and the Oxford University Refugee Studies Centre co-edited *Forced Migration Review No. 39: North Africa and Displacement 2011–2012*, which reflects on some of the experiences, challenges and lessons of the Arab Spring in North Africa. Numerous IOM staff contributions examine the implications of the Arab Spring for international migration actors and future challenges that will have to be addressed. These include the reintegration of returning migrants and the development of more effective cooperation mechanisms between actors.

Also see the IOM website for information on the 2012 *International Dialogue on Migration*, which addresses the topic “Managing Migration in Crisis Situations”. The first workshop, entitled “Moving to Safety: Migration Consequences of Complex Crises”, was held in April 2012. A second workshop, “Protecting Migrants during Times of Crisis: Immediate Responses and Sustainable Strategies”, will be held in Geneva in September.

Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A Handbook for Policymakers and Practitioners in Home and Host Countries

Governments at both ends of the migration cycle increasingly recognize the value of the spontaneous engagement of diasporas with their countries of origin and are seeking ways to cooperate with them. Beyond the remittances they send back to their homelands (more than USD 400 billion in 2010), diasporas are major direct investors in critical and emerging industries, known patrons of nascent tourism initiatives and generous philanthropists. The question facing policymakers is not so much if diasporas can benefit their countries of origin, but how they do so and what kinds of government policies and programmes can foster these relationships.

Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development, a project of IOM and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), offers policymakers and practitioners a user-friendly and practical guide on the state of the art in governmental diaspora initiatives. As more governments and stakeholders launch efforts to tap into the opportunities that diasporas represent, this handbook is the first and only comprehensive resource that presents a real-world strategy to smartly and successfully galvanize diaspora engagement.

Global Migration Issues, Vol. 1 - Global Perspectives on Migration and Development

This volume examines one of humanity’s most pressing concerns: global migration and its implications for development. As population mobility grows in an ever more crowded world, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) has emerged as the most important global mechanism to deal with the urgent challenges that global migration presents. This book explores fresh strategies proposed by the GFMD in its fourth year of operation in Mexico and beyond. Contributors discuss, and propose concrete solutions to, vital issues such as the debilitating costs of cross-border labour recruitment and the provision of social and income protection for foreign contract workers. With suggestions on how to facilitate connections between transnational families, and gender and family-sensitive immigration regimes, this book aims to foster collaborative intergovernmental links as well as partnerships between governments, civil society and international organizations.

L’impact psychosocial du sous-emploi sur la vie des femmes migrantes qualifiées travaillant à Genève (Suisse)

With the objective of giving more visibility to the under-researched topic of underemployment of migrant women, this report aims to take stock of existing literature on the topic, especially in the Swiss context, to present primary research findings about the psychological and social impact of underemployment on migrant women in the Swiss city of Geneva and draw policy recommendations to facilitate women’s integration to the labour market. By highlighting the psychosocial impacts of underemployment and giving voice to professional women facing this situation, this publication ultimately seeks to help mitigate the impact of underemployment on their well-being and optimize the benefits of migration for qualified migrant women.

The English version of this research report is included in the forthcoming publication Crushed Hopes: Underemployment and Deskilling among Skilled Migrant Women.
People on the Move in a Changing Climate: Comparing the Impact of Environmental Change on Migration in Different Regions of the World

Despite the growing body of literature on the topic of migration and climate change, there is no one volume which aims to compare how each of the major regions in the world is likely to be affected by this nexus in the coming years. This edited volume, which will be part of the Global Migration Issues Series published by Springer, therefore fills an important gap. The book will serve as an important tool for policymakers interested in promoting regional cooperation on issues relating to migration, the environment and climate change.

Global South. Since then, donors have attempted to “make migration work for the poor in the global South” and/or to manage migration better through combined policies that include aid policies, immigration policies in the broad sense, border enforcement initiatives and other aspects of external relations with countries of origin. Governments of developing countries, on the other hand, have directed new attention towards “their diasporas”, although often merely wooing rather than seriously including them. This issue of International Migration addresses the links between migration and development and evolving perspectives on the topic.

Migration Policy Practice, Vol. 2 (4), 2012

The focus of this edition of MPP is on migrant integration policies in a range of countries worldwide. This bilingual English–Spanish issue of MPP includes 10 articles written mostly by fellows of the Transatlantic Forum on Migration and Integration (TFMI). The Forum was established in 2008 by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) and the Robert Bosch Stiftung with a view to supporting an international learning and exchange platform on issues of migration and integration.

The TFMI Fellows featured in this issue of MPP include central government officials, and representatives of social partners and non-governmental organizations from Asia, Europe, South Africa and the United States, who discuss a range of migrant integration policies and programmes at the national and local levels.

Crushed Hopes: Underemployment and Deskilling among Skilled Migrant Women

This volume comprises a review of international literature on the subject of deskilling and underemployment from a gender perspective and three empirical case studies from Switzerland, Canada (Quebec) and the United Kingdom. It explores the disproportionate difficulties skilled migrant women can face in transferring their skills and finding employment commensurate with their education when relocating to a new country. Case studies highlight situations in which migratory status and labour market dynamics can combine to limit migrant women to low-skilled occupations despite their high human capital. The case studies also analyse the impact of such occupational downgrading on the well-being of migrant women and the strategies they adopt to regain their professional status.
Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)

Preparations for GFMD 2012 hosted by the Government of Mauritius are underway. Seven round-table sessions around the central theme, “Enhancing the human development of migrants and their contribution to the development of communities and states”, underpin the substantive work programme of the two-day summit to be held in Pailles, Mauritius on 21–22 November. Each round-table session will be prepared by a government team, with support from expert agencies and academia. Thirty-three countries, 10 from Africa, have assumed the role of co-chairs and/or team members. Ten international organizations, most of them members of the Global Migration Group (GMG), have offered their technical expertise for the various sessions, either by providing input to, or drafting, the full background paper.

For more information on GFMD, please visit: www.gfmd.org.

The African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Observatory on Migration

The ACP Observatory expects to complete studies on the policy framework of South–South migration for Cameroon, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Republic of Tanzania. The research will generate two key outputs: a nationally representative household survey and a country report. The studies addressing labour migration will focus on both needed improvements to the framework governing the emigration of workers to ACP countries and the immigration of workers. The ACP Observatory is also developing reports on internal migration in Angola, Cameroon, Haiti, Nigeria and Timor-Leste. This research will produce comprehensive reports on the main characteristics of internal migration, highlighting key challenges and critical aspects, such as access to basic social services and development.

For more information on ACP, please visit: http://www.acpmigration-obs.org/

IOM Migration Research and Training Centre (IOM-MRTC)

National Migration Planning Processes in Australia (English) analyses Australia’s contemporary migration program which consists of a permanent settlement program and the Temporary Migration Program, and draws a number of lessons for countries developing new immigration policies.

A Research on the Visa System of Germany for Attracting High Skilled Migrants (Full text- Korean, Executive Summary available in English) analyses Germany’s policies to overcome demographic challenges of low fertility rates and increase of ageing population by attracting high skilled migrants. The paper examines the Green Card scheme and series of amendments to the immigration law and highlights the importance and need of flexibility in labour migration law.

In April 2012, IOM-MRTC began publishing Migration Policy Weekly Reports (available only in Korean), a weekly online newsletter. IOM-MRTC has also published its first newsletter providing the latest updates on the Centre’s activities and featuring analysis of various migration policy issues by experts and practitioners from Korea and around the world.

Central European Forum for Migration and Population Research (CEFMR)

In 2012, CEFMR was involved in research within the ESPON-funded “ET2050 – Territorial Scenarios and Visions for Europe” project. The project aims to support policymakers in the field of territorial development and cohesion to produce a future-oriented and integrated vision on the development of the European territory. ET2050 started a territorial vision-building process, following a participatory process that involved relevant stakeholders at the European, national and regional levels. This vision has a strategic character that allows giving direction to the policy debate on territorial development. The project is expected to support and deliver input to the territorial vision-building process by updating, extending and refining the scenario work of ESPON. CEFMR is responsible for migration and population forecasting within the project.
This newsletter was produced by the Migration Research Division (MRD), based at IOM Headquarters in Geneva. MRD implements its own research projects and supports IOM field offices in developing and conducting policy-oriented and operational research in order to guide and inform migration policy and practice. The division is also responsible for developing and coordinating the organization’s overall research and publishing policy and for managing the specialized migration library.

For further information on MRD please consult:
http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/policy-research/migration-research/lang/en

For information on IOM publications, please refer to the online bookstore:

Recent research events


The IOM Independent Network of Labour Migration and Integration Experts (LINET), with the support of the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission, held a one-day expert seminar which investigated existing national practices for assessing, validating and recognizing formal, non-formal and informal learning of migrants in LINET target countries. The findings will serve as a basis for a subsequent debate with a broad range of stakeholders from EU institutions, national governments, social partners, businesses and experts that aims to place migration within the broader discourse of employment and education.

For more information, visit www.labourmigration.eu/events/7-Recognition.

Oxford Refugee Studies Centre – The Arab Spring and Beyond

The workshop invited international scholars, practitioners and policymakers to examine the extent to which the Arab Spring has shifted both migration and forced migration dynamics and governance in North Africa and the Levant. The workshop explored how varying processes of political, economic, and social contestation in North Africa and the Levant have affected human mobility. It examined how events have transformed or impacted the institutional behaviour and responses of international organizations and civil society groups working in the field of migration and displacement. Participants discussed how publics and governments in North Africa and the Levant have positioned or repositioned themselves in relation to issues of forced migration and migration. IOM’s Mohammed Abdiker, Director of the Department of Operations and Emergencies, presented the IOM response during the Libya crisis.

For more information, visit www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/news/arab-spring-workshop-summary.

IOM and the British Council – Dispelling Myths about Migration

On 29 May 2012, IOM and the British Council led a panel discussion at the University of Geneva on misperceptions regarding migrants and migration. A panel comprised of voices from the media, politics, the arts, practitioners and the migrant community developed new perspectives on the role several actors should play in dispelling migration myths.

“POCARIM: Mapping the Population, Careers, Mobilities and Impacts of Advanced Research Degree Graduates in the Social Sciences and Humanities”, funded by the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation under the Support Actions of the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Union, offers an international comparative study involving 12 European countries and the United States. The project aims to increase our understanding of the population, career paths, employment patterns and contribution of doctoral graduates in the social sciences and humanities (SSH) in Europe. It seeks to gather information on the population of PhD holders in SSH and their basic characteristics, including those who remain within or return to academic careers and those who leave academic research to apply their knowledge in other employment sectors. Mobility of researchers is one of the important characteristics under investigation. CEFMR is the Polish partner in the project, and it is also responsible, as a work package leader, for the design, implementation and analyses of the survey for advanced degree holders in SSH.

For more information on the CEFMR, please refer to: www.cefmr.pan.pl.