MIGRATION POLICY PRACTICE

A Bimonthly Journal for and by Policymakers Worldwide

ISSN 2223-5248   Vol. V, Number 1, February 2015–March 2015

The Convoy proceeding its Trip from Zouarke to Faya (Northern Chad). © IOM 2011

CONTENTS

Published jointly by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Eurasylum Ltd.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

EurAsylum

Introduction

Solon Ardittis and Frank Laczko[1]

Welcome to the latest issue of *Migration Policy Practice*. This issue broadly focuses on three main themes – public perceptions of migration, analysis of irregular migration and return trends, and measuring the impact of migration policies.

Changing how the world views migration

The first article, written by IOM's Deputy Director General Laura Thompson, focuses on how to address negative perceptions of migration. Despite much evidence to the contrary, the general public is often quite misinformed about the scale and impact of migration today. Misunderstanding and negative perceptions are often fuelled by sensational media coverage, which tends to focus on the costs of migration rather than its benefits. However, recent research conducted on behalf of IOM by Gallup, suggests that public attitudes to migration are more varied than is commonly realized. Between 2010 and 2012, Gallup conducted nationally representative surveys in over 140 countries, and found that only in Europe do you find a majority of people in favour of reducing immigration. However, even within Europe, attitudes vary considerably between countries in the North and those in the South. This study, the first global survey of public opinion on migration, suggests that we still do not know enough about the factors that shape attitudes to migration. The article suggests that such surveys should be replicated on a regular basis, so that we can monitor better changes in public attitudes to migration across the globe. IOM's Deputy Director General also outlines an action plan and a series of concrete measures that could be a taken to address anti-migrant sentiment and promote a more evidence-based discussion about migration.

Migrant fatalities

Three articles in this issue focus on different aspects of irregular migration. In the first article, Stefanie Grant discusses the growing number of migrant deaths at sea in the Mediterranean region and around the world. IOM data (see map) shows that at least 5,000 migrants lost their lives trying to cross borders in 2014. During the first four months of 2015, at least 700 migrants died according to IOM figures (see text box). Although this growing problem has attracted the attention of the world's media and senior policymakers in Europe, little action has been taken to reduce the number of migrant fatalities. Nor has much action been taken to assist the families of "missing migrants". Stefanie Grant highlights the fact that many of the families of missing migrants experience a "double tragedy". Not only do they lose a loved one, but often it is extremely difficult for them to find out any information regarding the circumstances of their relatives' death and burial. As yet, there is no internationally agreed common set of procedures and practices for dealing with the remains of undocumented migrants. If the death of a missing migrant cannot be legally confirmed, this can affect a family's entitlement to inheritance, remarriage and guardianship of children.

Assisted voluntary return and reintegration

As irregular migration increases, a growing number of countries are interested in finding safe, humane and cost-effective means of returning irregular migrants to their countries of origin through assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes. IOM alone assisted nearly 50,000 migrants to return home in 2013 under such schemes. Despite the fact that AVR programmes have been operating for over 30 years, relatively few studies have analysed the impact of return and reintegration schemes. Khalid Koser and Katie Kuschminder's article is a rare example of a study on returnees participating in AVR programmes based on extensive field research conducted in 15 countries around the world. This study is also important from a conceptual perspective because it sets out to develop a framework for defining and measuring the sustainability of approaches to voluntary return.

1   Solon Ardittis is Managing Director of Eurasylum Ltd. Frank Laczko is Head of the Migration Research Division at IOM Headquarters in Geneva. They are the co-editors of *Migration Policy Practice.*

A particular useful tool – a return and reintegration index – was specifically developed for the study, which could be potentially replicated in other studies. The researchers found that in many instances, returnees could not be described as reintegrated, and return was likely not to be sustainable. One of the key implications for policy identified by the authors is the need for further research focusing on how best to design effective reintegration assistance.

Australia's Innovative Irregular Migration Research Programme

This latter study was commissioned by the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection Irregular Migration Research Programme. Australia's innovative research programme is presented in a separate article by Marie McAuliffe and Alex Parrinder. Irregular migration stories regularly receive extensive media coverage, but relatively few governments fund research to understand better the causes and consequences of irregular migration. Australia's research programme is innovative in this respect, funding high-quality, rigorous, quantitative and qualitative research on irregular migration. One of the strengths of the programme is its intention to inform policy and operational deliberations, but not recommend or advocate specific policy options. An independent review of the research programme in 2014 found that the structures and relationships underscoring the research programme represent a "best practice" model, drawing upon both government and non-government migration expertise. Given the often heated and politically charged debates about irregular migration, a programme of this kind providing carefully considered and researched evidence could potentially be a model for other countries.

Comparing migration policies: Are indexes a useful tool?

At international meetings and conferences, migration officials often agree on the need for more effective and well-managed migration policies. But how should success and progress be measured in the migration policy arena? Over the last decade, academic researchers have increasingly become interested in the idea of developing an international index to monitor and measure the impact of migration policies. Over a dozen such indexes have been developed. Usually these indexes cover a specific area of migration policy such as labour migration or integration policies. Most

only focus on immigration rather than on emigration policies. In most cases, the index is developed for one time period and there are few ongoing continuous migration policy indexes. Nearly all the indexes have been developed by civil society experts, sometimes with the assistance of the private sector. Few governments have agreed to sponsor or endorse migration policy indexes. However, this situation may change, if migration is factored into the new global post-2015 development agenda. As things stand, according to the Open Working Group on the post-2015 development agenda, States may be expected to agree on a target which will encourage them to promote "well-managed and planned migration policies", in order to reduce inequalities and promote development. It is interesting, therefore, to consider the experience of the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), which is one of the few indexes that continues to be implemented each year since 2004. Jan Niessen, Director of the Migration Policy Group, discusses the creation of the index and how it has proven to be a useful policy tool over the last 10 years.

We thank all the contributors to this issue of *Migration Policy Practice* and invite readers to spare a couple of minutes to participate in a survey, which aims to help us identify our readers' profiles, the institutions they represent and their primary interests in our journal. Should you wish to participate in this survey, please **click here**.◼

Changing public perceptions of immigration

Laura Thompson[1]

Boeing, Steinway, Levi-Strauss and Heinz are all household names in the United States and beyond. Less well known is the fact that these successful companies were founded by German-American migrants. Today 46 million Americans claim German ancestry, making German-Americans, the largest single ethnic group in the United States.[2] This figure reminds us that not so long ago, millions of migrants left Europe in search of a better life. Today, Europe attracts migrants from all over the world.

However, far from celebrating the fact that people want to come to Europe, and other developed countries, we are witnessing a troubling rise in anti-migrant sentiment. Not only are the contributions of immigrants often ignored, but the prevalent discourse around them is replete with myths and stereotypes which only feed a sentiment of opposition among the general public, hindering migrant integration and undermining social trust at the national and local levels. Migration is too often viewed as a problem and there is a risk that immigration policies in many countries will be shaped by fears and misconceptions rather than facts.

This article presents and dispels some of the most common myths associated with migration, outlines recent findings about public perceptions of migration globally, and suggests ways in which communication about migration can and should be improved for the benefit of migrants and non-migrants alike.

Misperceptions surrounding migration

Several studies suggest that there are many misperceptions about the impact of migration in origin and destination countries, which fuel negative sentiment about migration.

A common misperception is that there are too many immigrants. In some European countries, ordinary citizens estimate the number of immigrants at three times more than there really are. The 2014 Transatlantic Trends survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund showed that misinformation about basic migration facts is a significant determinant of anti-immigrant sentiment: in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom and Greece, among others, the proportion of people who agreed that there are too many immigrants in their countries fell sharply when people were told how many immigrants were actually residing there.

Another misperception is that the majority of migrants are desperate people who come from the poorest parts of the world. People are generally unaware of the fact that South–South migration (migration between developing countries) is just as great as migration between the global South and the global North (migration from developing to developed countries). About a fifth of all migrants move across richer countries. Also, a growing number of people are moving from the North to the South in search of work – for instance, Portuguese moving to Angola or Spanish moving to Argentina and other South American countries.

Too often migration is perceived as solely an immigration issue. Not many are aware that with some 5 million people, the British diaspora is the eighth largest in the world. The desire of British people to move abroad and become emigrants and the arrival of immigrants in the United Kingdom, for instance, are treated as completely different matters. The migration policy debate in Europe is almost entirely focused on immigration policy questions and neglects the implications of emigration.

Another common misperception is that developed countries do not need low-skilled migrants (Migration Policy Centre, 2014). In fact, non-specialized workers contribute to the functioning of the European economy by taking up jobs undesirable to natives, which in turn allows natives to take up higher-skilled and more remunerative employment (OECD, 2008). There is also little evidence supporting the

---

1 Laura Thompson is the Deputy Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

2 The Economist, "German Americans: The Silent Minority", 7 February 2015.

claim that migrants depress the wages of low-skilled workers; one study found that between 1990 and 2000, all European countries experienced a decrease in their average wages because of emigration, while immigration led to a positive effect on the average wages of native workers (Docquier et al., 2014).

That migrants take jobs away from nationals is another stereotype. Empirical evidence suggests that countries with high unemployment rates usually have lower – not higher – immigration rates, partly because migrants move where they are more likely to find jobs. Migrants usually take jobs that natives are unwilling or unable to do, thus complementing the local labour force rather than competing with it. Various studies estimate that labour shortages at various levels will be widespread across the developed and developing world in the near future (Hays, 2014; Boston Consulting Group, 2014; McKinsey Global Institute, 2012).

Too often migrants are perceived to represent a drain on the welfare system in destination countries, while research shows that migrants contribute to public finances more than they take out in public benefits and services in almost every European country (OECD, 2013). Migrants, particularly the highly skilled, often contribute more, on average, to countries of destination than natives do, because such countries have not had to bear the costs of training and educating migrants who arrive to work (IOM, 2011).

Contrary to fears that immigration depresses the innovation capacity of destination countries, migration has been shown to enhance innovation. Successful companies such as Google, Intel, PayPal, eBay and Yahoo! – to name a few – have all been co-founded by migrants. Immigrants are more than twice as likely as the native-born to found a company (Wadhwa et al., 2012). Highly skilled migrants and diversity in the workplace also positively affect work productivity in recipient countries (Parrotta, 2014; Trax et al., 2012). Migration is a global reality affecting nearly all countries of the world. For people around the globe to benefit from migration, there is a dire need to promote a debate in which the contribution of migrants to home and host societies is acknowledged and myths are countered with accurate and truthful communication about basic migration facts.
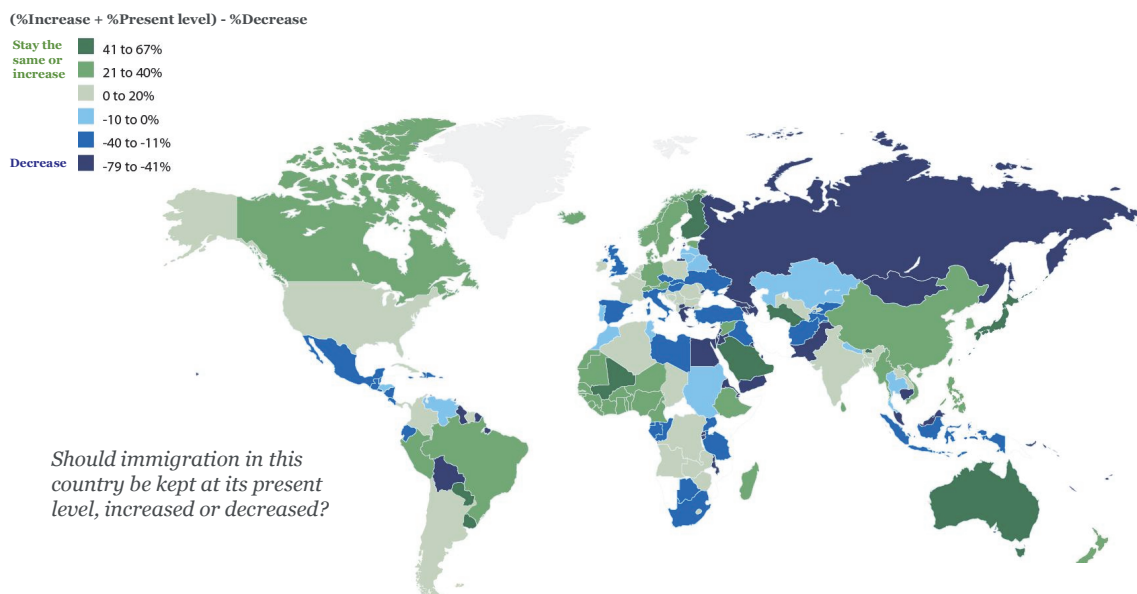
Understanding public perceptions of immigration

The media has a key role to play in influencing attitudes to migration. Hardly a day goes by without migration hitting the headlines somewhere in the world. Too often, however, the media tends to focus on the negative aspects of migration. One recent study of 58,000 migration news stories conducted by researchers at the University of Oxford found that the most common word used to describe immigrants was "illegal", even though by far the majority of migrants enter and reside legally. It was also found that the most common modifier of asylum-seekers was the word "failed". It was also typical for journalists to use words such as "terrorist" when reporting on migration stories, stoking fears that migration could be linked to terrorism (Allen and Binder, 2013).

In World Migration Report 2011: Communicating Effectively about Migration, IOM reviewed the evidence regarding the media's portrayal of migrants. Several studies show that the media tends to focus on illegality, crisis, controversy and government failure, and on more sensational stories, feeding misperceptions surrounding migration. In order to correct this negative portrayal of migration, it is first necessary to better understand how people around the world view migration and what factors, beyond media discourse, influence public opinion.

The forthcoming IOM report How the World Views Migration provides a rare insight into public attitudes towards migration around the world. Drawing on data from the Gallup World Poll, the report presents, for the first time, a global overview of what people worldwide think about migration based on surveys of 183,772 adults conducted in more than 140 countries between 2012 and 2014. Some of the report's initial findings are reported here below.

First, public attitudes to migration across the globe are more varied than one might think, and are not predominantly negative as one might imagine (Figure 1). The study finds that more of the world is in favour of migration than against it. Worldwide, people are generally more likely to want immigration levels in their countries to either stay at their present levels (21.8 per cent) or to be increased (21.3 per cent), rather than to see immigration levels decrease (34.5 per cent).
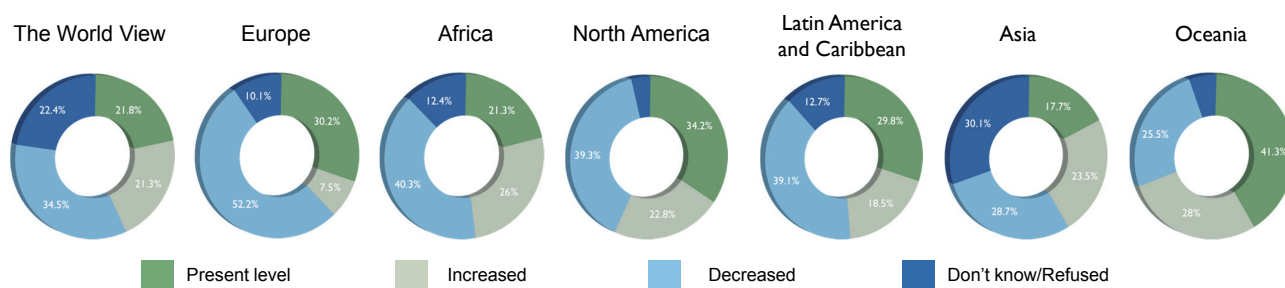
Figure 1: How the world views migration, 2012–2014

(%Increase + %Present level) - %Decrease

Stay the same or increase
- 41 to 67%
- 21 to 40%
- 0 to 20%
- -10 to 0%
- -40 to -11%

Decrease
- -79 to -41%

Should immigration in this country be kept at its present level, increased or decreased?

Source: IOM-Gallup World Poll, *How the World Views Migration* **(forthcoming).***

People in Europe are the most negative towards immigration, although just slightly over the majority (52.1%) say immigration levels should be decreased (Figure 2). In North America – another main receiving region – only 39 per cent express this view. Opinions vary across Europe: the majority of adults in nearly all Northern European countries, apart from the United Kingdom, would like to see levels of immigration stay the same or increase. By contrast, residents in much of the Mediterranean region – an entry point to Europe for many irregular migrants – would like to see immigration levels decrease.

Residents in Latin America and the Caribbean generally want immigration levels to stay the same or increase, with some exceptions such as Costa Rica and Ecuador. Opinions vary widely in Asia. Some countries favour decreasing immigration, such as Israel (76%) and Pakistan (76%). Alternatively, the majority in countries like Japan and the Republic of Korea favour increasing or maintaining immigration levels.

People in North African countries tend to be more likely to want immigration levels to decrease (Egypt, 72%; Libya, 54%). South Africa also shows over 50 per cent wanting decreased levels. However, in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which have the highest percentage of temporary migrant workers in their populations, relatively small percentages of people want to see immigration levels decrease, and a high percentage want to see levels increase or stay the same.

Figure 2: Should immigration (in this country) be kept at its present level, increased or decreased? Regional overview

The World View
- 21.8%
- 21.3%
- 34.5%
- 22.4%

Europe
- 30.2%
- 7.5%
- 52.2%
- 10.1%

Africa
- 21.3%
- 26%
- 40.3%
- 12.4%

North America
- 34.2%
- 22.8%
- 39.3%

Latin America and Caribbean
- 29.8%
- 18.5%
- 39.1%
- 12.7%

Asia
- 17.7%
- 23.5%
- 28.7%
- 30.1%

Oceania
- 41.3%
- 28%
- 25.5%

Legend:
- Present level
- Increased
- Decreased
- Don't know/Refused

Source: IOM-Gallup World Poll, *How the World Views Migration* **(forthcoming).***

* See http://iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2015/pbn-listing/how-the-world-views-migration-io.html.

People's perceptions of their country's economic situation may be the strongest predictor of their attitudes towards immigration. Adults who believe economic conditions in their countries are "fair" or "poor" are almost twice as likely to say immigration levels should decrease as those who say conditions are "excellent" or "good". Similarly, those who say conditions are getting worse are nearly twice as likely to favour decreased immigration as those who say economic conditions are getting better (48.0% versus 25.3%). The importance of economic factors may explain why attitudes to migration in the North of Europe, with the exception of the United Kingdom, seem to be much more favourable than in the South of Europe. The significant rise in the number of people trying to enter Europe in irregular ways over the last two years through the southern Mediterranean countries may also explain why attitudes in the South are more negative.

Improving communication about migration: A few steps towards a global action plan

Although the 2013 United Nations High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development stressed the need to improve the way in which we communicate about migration, no action plan was developed or agreed upon to guide policymakers around the world, as to how best to address this challenge. Here are some of the concrete steps that could be taken to develop a global action plan ensuring more effective communication about migration.

- *Monitoring public opinion – creating a global migration barometer*

Understanding the way the public perceives migration globally is fundamental if we want to develop effective campaigns addressing public attitudes to migration. As a result, a global survey of public opinion about migration on a regular basis is needed. This global survey could provide a barometer of the way in which public perceptions of migration change over time and vary across different countries and regions of the world.

- *Gathering and using the evidence*

At the same time, given the widespread misperceptions surrounding migration, it is essential to invest in gathering facts and figures about migration, as well as in analysing and using such evidence for policy purposes. Better awareness of migration-related facts and of the positive contributions of migrants will facilitate the implementation of integration measures and reduce the likelihood of extremism and xenophobia.

- *Promoting information campaigns targeting destination countries*

There is a long history of using information campaigns in the migration field. However, in most cases, such campaigns operate in countries of origin and target would-be migrants, warning them about the risks of irregular migration. A new type of information campaign is needed today targeting the general public in destination countries, using new means of communication such as social media to reach target audiences.

- *Building a partnership with the media*

It is fundamental to work in partnership with the media to encourage a more balanced coverage of migration by supporting the information needs of journalists. For this purpose, it is important to have a clear understanding of the type of information media needs and the format in which it is needed to facilitate its work. One attempt to do so is the work IOM is doing in developing a one-stop shop for journalists called the Migration Newsdesk, with the aim of providing a steady flow of unbiased information on migration for the media to use.

- *Ensuring that migrant voices are heard*

The voices of migrants are also an important element in ensuring a balanced perception of what migration really is and entails. IOM is developing an oral history project called The Migrant's Path, which aims to capture the authentic voices of global migration for posterity.

Conclusion

One of our greatest challenges today is to ensure that evidence about the real impact of migration on sending and receiving countries reaches and is understood by the general public. This will be necessary if we are to maximize the benefits of migration while promoting a human-rights-based approach to it. Accurate and truthful information about immigration will also allow politicians to develop fact-based policies and legislative frameworks, which are more likely to respond to the needs of their citizens while promoting the protection and integration of migrants in host societies.

International organizations and non-governmental organizations as well as the media and politicians themselves have a fundamental role in this endeavour. This article has suggested several practical steps that go in the same direction. More work is, however, needed from all sides to understand what shapes individual perceptions of immigrants, to address people's concerns about immigration, promote an informed debate on the matter, and to bring into it the voices of migrants themselves.■

References

Boston Consulting Group
2014   The global workforce crisis: $10 trillion at risk. *BCG Perspectives, by the Boston Consulting Group*, 2 July.

Docquier, F., Ç. Ozden and G. Peri
2014   The labour market effects of immigration and emigration in OECD countries. *The Economic Journal*, 124(579):1106–1145. doi:10.1111/ecoj.12077.

Hays
2014   *The Perfect Talent Storm: The Hays Global Skills Index 2014*. Hays, London.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
2011   *World Migration Report 2011: Communicating Effectively about Migration*. IOM, Geneva.

McKinsey Global Institute
2012   *The World at Work: Jobs, Pay, and Skills for 3.5 Billion People*. McKinsey & Company/ McKinsey Global Institute.

Allen, W. and S. Binder
2013   *Migration in the News: Portrayals of Immigrants, Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees in National British Newspapers, 2010-2012.* Migration Observatory report, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford, Oxford.

Migration Policy Centre
2014   *Is What We Hear About Migration Really True? Questioning Eight Stereotypes* (P. Fargues, ed.). Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Florence.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD)
2008   *International Migration Outlook 2008.* OECD, Paris.
2013   *International Migration Outlook 2013.* OECD, Paris.

Parrotta, P., D. Pozzoli and M. Pytlikova
2014   The nexus between labor diversity and firm's innovation. *Journal of Population Economics,* 27(2):303–364.

Trax, M., S. Brunow and J. Suedekum
2012   *Cultural Diversity and Plant-Level Productivity*. IZA Discussion Paper Series No. 6845, Institute for the Study of Labor, Bonn, Germany.

Wadhwa, V. et al.
2009   *America's Loss is the World's Gain: America's New Immigration Entrepreneurs,* Part IV.

"One of our greatest challenges today is to ensure that evidence about the real impact of migration on sending and receiving countries reaches and is understood by the general public."

Migrant deaths at sea: Addressing the information deficit

Stefanie Grant[1]

Irregular migration by sea is not a new phenomenon. But in recent years the numbers have grown, border controls have tightened and routes have become more dangerous. This has resulted in a significant known loss of life, and unknown numbers of missing migrants and refugees. It is likely that most of the dead remain unidentified. Although routes may alter, in response to situations in countries of origin and departure, border controls, smuggling operations and weather, this continuing humanitarian tragedy is unlikely to end.

There is an acute lack of accurate – or often any – information about these deaths, and there is a pressing need to improve methods of recording, identification and tracing. This article reviews the context for these deaths, contrasts the responses to migratory deaths with responses to deaths in other humanitarian disasters, identifies current initiatives and suggests some ways forward.

Migrant deaths at sea

In the last two decades, a large but unknown number of migrants and refugees have set out on sea journeys to seek safety, security and better lives. An estimated 348,000 journeys were made in 2014.[2] Migrant journeys take place in the Mediterranean; in the Gulf of Aden; in the Caribbean; in Asia, in the Andaman Sea off Myanmar, the Bay of Bengal off Bangladesh, and the Indian Ocean between Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia.

Without legal options to enter or seek asylum, many turn to smugglers and are transported on unseaworthy boats on dangerous sea routes. In Europe, the result has been an "epidemic" of deaths;[3] the dead and missing include asylum-seekers fleeing conflict and persecution – in the Syrian Arab Republic, Eritrea and Somalia – and migrants leaving situations of extreme insecurity and poverty, many from sub-Saharan Africa. Women, children and babies are among the dead.[4]

IOM's 2014 report, *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration*, is the first comprehensive attempt to assess the number of deaths occurring globally.[5] IOM estimates fatalities in 2014 exceeded 5,000, of which over 3,000 occurred in the Mediterranean. The report estimated at least 40,000 deaths globally since 2000. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the true number is likely to be very much higher. Over 400 deaths were reported in the Mediterranean in the first three months of 2015.[6]

Migratory deaths: Humanitarian tragedies

An important but unfortunate distinction has been made between loss of life in the course of irregular migrant journeys, and deaths in commercial shipping accidents or in humanitarian disasters. This has meant that data – which is routinely collected when a plane crashes, a ship is wrecked or an earthquake occurs – is not collected when migrant boats sink.

Most of the information used in Fatal Journeys is from civil society organizations,[7] often relying on media reports. This illustrates how little attention has been given by States to recording these deaths. States generally do not publish figures. Fatalities have tended to be regarded as the unintended consequences of State action to control borders, prevent irregular migration, combat smuggling and trafficking, and

1   Stefanie Grant is a Consultant at Harrison Grant Solicitors, London, United Kingdom.

2   See www.unhcr.org/5486e6b56.html.

3   S. Robins, I. Kovras and A. Valliantu, *Addressing Migrant Bodies on Europe's Southern Frontier: An Agenda for Practice and Research.* Available from www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/isctsj/Research/WP-05-14/.

4   See, generally, S. Grant, "Migration and frontier deaths: A right to identity?" In: *Who Believes in the Rights of Migrants?* (M. Dembour and T. Kelly, eds.) (London, Routledge, 2011).

5   T. Brian and F. Laczko (eds.), *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration* (Geneva, International Organization for Migration, 2014).

6   See reports from IOM: www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2015/pbn-listing/iom-fears-over-300-african-migra.html; and UNHCR: www.unhcr.org/54db82536.html; (accessed 19 March 2015).

7   T. Brian and F. Laczko (eds.), *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration* (Geneva, International Organization for Migration, 2014), pp. 207–212.

protect national security. Where irregular travel is seen as a form of criminality, this is used by authorities to justify withholding of information on security and operational grounds, and adds to the information vacuum.[8] National statistics are generally not collected, nor – with very few exceptions – have systematic efforts been made to identify the dead. In Europe, Frontex, the European Union border control agency, publishes figures for illegal border crossings but not for border deaths. Action has yet to be taken in response to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's call to the European Union to set up "a proper system of data collection of the mortal remains of [migrant] lives lost in the Mediterranean and make it swiftly accessible to relatives."[9]

Inaction by States[10] is in striking contrast to their energetic and principled responses to large-scale deaths in domestic and international traffic accidents – shipwrecks or air crashes. Identification of bodies is here seen as an imperative, for burial and mourning, and for inheritance and other civil proceedings affecting the family,[11] "(t)he care with which our dead are treated is a mark of how civilised a society we are."[12]

International protocols have been developed for recording the dead in humanitarian disasters, identifying their mortal remains and working with families. These build on well-established rules in time of war; they reflect the long humanitarian experience of the Red Cross and its work to trace missing persons; they also draw on field operations by international organizations.[13] The work of the

International Commission on Missing Persons has utilized developments in the fields of genetics, forensic science, and information technology to identify the dead and missing in conflict and in humanitarian disasters; online databases can be used by families.[14]

Central to these responses is recognition that families have a right to know the fate of missing relatives, whether their fathers, brothers, sisters, mothers or children have died, and if so where their remains are buried. This right is well established in international humanitarian law. Humanitarian practice respects a family's right to know the fate of his/her missing relatives, including those missing on migratory journeys. Interpol recognizes that "for legal, religious, cultural and other reasons, human beings have the right not to lose their identities after death".[15] For families, the legal and human consequences of not knowing are profound: funeral and mourning ceremonies cannot take place; legal issues such as inheritance and land ownership remain unresolved; a wife cannot remarry.

Action to record fatalities and establish identities, where lives are lost in accidents and humanitarian emergencies, is both a matter of good policy and a central component of the human rights duty to respect the right to life. Similar approaches should be taken in the context of migrant deaths. But these deaths present particular challenges.

Challenges to identification

In November 2013, a conference was held under the auspices of the Red Cross and the University of Milan to review the management and identification of dead migrants in the Mediterranean.[16] It identified a number of problems. They included: a failure to use shared standardized protocols and forms for recording and managing information at the national and regional levels; variable forensic capacity in urban and rural settings; lack of antemortem data to compare with the findings from dead bodies; "underdeveloped or inexistent" collection of information on all non-

8   See Pickering and Webber, op. cit., p. 196.

9   Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Doc. 13532, 24 June 2014.

10 In contrast to Italy's admirable Mare Nostrum Operation, some European States went so far as to refuse support for rescue operations in the Mediterranean. See: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldhansrd/text/141015w0001.htm.

11 For example, the response to loss of Malaysian Air MH380 in March 2014.

12 *Public Inquiry into the Identification of Victims following Major Transport Accidents: Report of Lord Justice Clarke*, Volume 1, Cm 5012 (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2001), paragraph 2.3.

13   Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters: IASC Operational Guidelines on Human Rights and Natural Disasters* (Washington, D.C., Brookings–Berne Project on Internal Displacement, 2006); O. Morgan, M. Tidball-Binz, D. van Alphen (eds.), Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters: A Field Manual for First Responders (Washington, D.C., Pan American Health Organization, 2009), available from www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc-002-0880.pdf.

14 See www.ic-mp.org/the-missing/.

15 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Article 3, *Guiding Principles/Model Law on the Missing* (Geneva, ICRC, 2009); Interpol, Resolution No. AGN/65/RES/13.

16 "First conference on the management and identification of unidentified decedents, with an emphasis on dead migrants: The experience of European Mediterranean countries", Milan, Italy, 30 October and 1 November 2013.

identified bodies, including migrants; existing databases were not accessible, "least of all by the victims themselves".

These findings reflect general shortcomings in national forensic procedures, death management and death registration, both inside and outside Europe.

Last and Spikerboer's research in southern European States found that in the absence of "specific laws dealing with the burial of unauthorized border crossers . . . bodies have been scattered among government, religious and specially designated cemeteries. . . . Depending on the practice of each individual cemetery, records may or may not specify location and cause of death . . .". In Italy, unidentified bodies were brought to municipal morgues, hospitals, cemeteries and institutes of forensic pathology without a common record system.[17]

Robins and Kovras found that on the Greek island of Lesbos, a main migrant entry point for the Aegean, bodies were disposed of "with no consideration for . . . potential future identification"; the vast majority were buried in unmarked graves. Post-mortem data was not linked to the gravesite. They visited a cemetery on the island of Mytilene, and saw:

> bodies lightly covered by earth, while the only mark on the grave is a broken stone on which is written the (purported) nationality of the migrant, a number and the date of death [e.g. Afghan, no. 3, 5/01/2013]. In the absence of any identity papers on the body, or a survivor to confirm the identity, the identities of the victims are rarely known . . . the claimed nationality is often based on a more or less informed guess on the part of the authorities.[18]

Similar problems are reported from the United States where "there is no centralized repository for all reports of missing persons last seen crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. A family can report a missing person to an office in one state, while the body is discovered in another. There is . . . no consistent way for these records to be connected".[19] In Mexico, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) reported that:

> lack of information concerning the chain of custody that the remains followed makes it difficult to track the remains . . . when there are no written records or photographs of the evidence being sent, who requested that the evidence be sent, when the request was made and where the evidence was to be sent; or when there is no record of who received the evidence, when and where the evidence was sent, and who has the evidence in safe keeping. . . .[20]

Survivors are an important traditional source of information. But, anecdotally, it appears that they are often not interviewed when they disembark, or not given an opportunity to report who was on a boat, and if they saw anyone drown.

Globally, the circumstances of these deaths create particular challenges to identification because, inter alia, they are "open" disasters, deaths occur in a transnational context, illegality deters reporting by families, and consular notification may be ineffective or inappropriate.

"Open" disasters. After a commercial ship is wrecked or a plane crashes, numbers and identities are established using passenger lists. These are "closed" situations because the group at risk is known, and data from the bodies – *post-mortem* data – can be compared with information from families – *antemortem* data. But in an "open" disaster, the population at risk is defined only by who may have been present: which migrants happened to be on the boat when it sank, and with no passenger list this information is often very difficult to obtain. Another complicating factor is that many irregular migrants carry no form of identification; documents may have been taken by smugglers, or destroyed in order to avoid detection.

Transnational deaths. Antemortem data is unlikely to be available for comparison where deaths occur

17 T. Brian and F. Laczko (eds.), *Fatal Journeys* (Geneva, IOM, 2014), p. 99. See also: C. Cattaneo et al., "Unidentified bodies and human remains: An Italian glimpse through a European problem, Forensic Science International, 195(1–3):167.e1–167.e6.

18 S. Robins, I. Kovras and A. Valliantu, *Addressing Migrant Bodies on Europe's Southern Frontier*.

19 R. Reineke, "Lost in the system: Unidentified bodies on the border". Available from https://nacla.org/search/node/Lost%20in%20the%20System%3A%20Unidentified%20Bodies%20on%20the%20Border.

20 IACHR, *Human Rights of Migrants and Other Persons in the Context of Human Mobility in Mexico*, OEA/Ser.L/V/II, Doc. 48/13 (Washington, D.C., 2013), paragraph 186.

far from the individual's home, often without any geographical link between the place of the shipwreck and the country of origin. The dead and missing may have passed through a number of countries on complex migration routes. Many families will not know that a relative was – or may have been – travelling in a boat which was lost, and few can travel to the place where the dead were brought, in order to search or identify, because of cost, distance or visa requirements.

Illegality and reporting. Where families are themselves irregular migrants they often fear that reporting a missing relative to the police will endanger their own immigration position. Unless a clear and visible distinction is made between recording and identifying deaths and enforcing border control, this fear will deter witnesses from giving information.

Consular services. Where foreign nationals die abroad, information is typically transmitted to families through the consul of their state of nationality.[21] But consular notification may not be effective in the case of irregular migrant deaths if family addresses are not known or are remote from a capital. It may not be appropriate in the case of refugees who have left their countries illegally and whose families could be put at risk. In a civil war, administrative structures do not function.

Steps forward

The 2013 Milan expert conference recommended, inter alia, that:

- every unidentified body should be adequately managed, analysed and tracked to ensure proper documentation, traceability and dignity;

- common forensic protocols and standards are implemented at the national and European levels;

- national and European capacities are built for identification;

- "(s)earchable and open databases" are developed at the national and European levels; and

- focal points are established for families, including "provisions for families to easily obtain and provide information on their missing loved ones, free of charge and threats".

In November 2013, the International Commission on Missing Persons set out its Agenda for the Future. It noted the need to improve the availability and quality of data, and proposed an international mechanism to deal with all missing-person cases – from conflict, human rights abuses, organized violence and migration. But it also warned of the risk that forensic science had outstripped ethical standards, emphasized the need to apply human rights standards to the use of forensic genetics, and stressed that the interests and welfare of the individual must have priority over the rights and interests of society.[22]

A major impediment to identification is the lack of mechanisms to link post-mortem data from countries where dead migrants are found with antemortem data from families in countries of origin.

These four initiatives show how recording and identification can be done:

Partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organizations. In Yemen, a local NGO working with UNHCR searches for and collects the bodies of those washed ashore from shipwrecks in the Gulf of Aden; personal details of the deceased are recorded and the bodies are buried in a special cemetery; prayers are said.[23] Most of the dead are from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia.

Collaboration between civil society, government, families and forensic scientists. Civil society organizations in Central America are working with relatives of migrants to create a regional system to centralize the exchange of information about missing migrants and unidentified remains.[24] Databanks have been created in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and in Chiapas, Mexico. The databanks contain information on the background to each case of disappearance [date of departure, date of most recent phone call, the route and other information], antemortem data [a physical description of the person when he/she was alive], and genetic samples and profiles of family members. DNA sequenced from families is compared with DNA from the unidentified

---

21 As was the case for tourists who died in the 2004 Asian tsunami.

22 "The missing: An agenda for the future", International Commission on Missing Persons Conference report, 29 October–1 November 2013, p. 18.

23 See http://shsyemen.org/en/?cat=4.

24 IACHR, *Human Rights of Migrants and Other Persons in the Context of Human Mobility in Mexico* (Washington, D.C., 2013), paragraphs 199, 203 and 409(27).

dead. The IACHR describes the creation of national forensic databanks and the sharing of information with other forensic databanks as a "best practice" that States on the migration route between Central and North America should replicate.[25]

National inquiry commission. The Italian Government has established a special commission to identify bodies from two shipwrecks off Lampedusa in October 2013, working through forensic experts from Laboratorio di Antropologia e Odontologia Forense (LABANOF, Forensic Anthropology and Odontology Laboratory).[26] The commission has asked family members to provide documentary and personal evidence.[27] This information, including DNA samples, will be compared with post-mortem data taken from the bodies. This is the first investigation of its kind by a European State: it is an important precedent.

Civil society work with families. The Colibrí Center for Human Rights in the United States assists families to search for relatives by taking forensically detailed missing person reports and working with partners, including forensic experts and consulates, to help identify the dead. The Center collects and tracks data on the missing and unidentified along the entire United States–Mexico border.[28]

Practical steps

Improving information in this complex area requires action at different levels – international, national and local.

The starting point is that the response to migrant deaths should be essentially similar to that for deaths in commercial air crashes, shipwrecks or humanitarian disasters, where immediate steps are taken to count the dead, record the missing, identify the victims, interview survivors and preserve evidence. Priorities include the following:

- Developing methodologies and definitions that make data comparable between regions, countries and within national administrations;

- Agreeing on common methods of recording information and of tracking bodies for use in *all* situations where a migrant body is found or a missing migrant is reported; these should build on Red Cross and international humanitarian experience in recording, identifying and tracing the dead and missing due to conflicts and humanitarian disasters;

- Use of these recording methods by *all* those involved in rescue or management of bodies, including national and international coast/border guards, commercial vessels, police, coroners and mortuary officials;

- Training for these officials;

- Maintaining a strict distinction between records for the purposes of border control and records for the identification of the dead and missing;

- The immediate collection of data and preservation of evidence;

- Systematic efforts to identify the dead and missing, recognizing the families' right to know the fate of missing relatives, report the missing, identify the dead and access information;

- The collection and dissemination of best practices.

The need for *data banks* is clear. Decisions on appropriate governance structures should be made after consultation between States, civil society, and humanitarian agencies, with substantive input from migrant and refugee communities, and after building on experience from Central America. In countries where there is evidence of corruption or collusion between State authorities and smugglers and traffickers, a State-led process of recording and identification will not be appropriate.

Data banks should:

- be overseen by a body that represents parties with a legitimate interest, such as national authorities responsible for death registration, national and intergovernmental organizations such as the Red Cross, civil society and families;

- ensure scientific, secure and independent data handling;

- protect the privacy and security of families; irregular migrants, refugees and victims of organized crime are especially vulnerable;

- have no direct links to border control; and

- be accessible to families.

---

25 IACHR, op. cit., paragraph 203.

26 Italian Government Special Committee for Missing Persons, LABANOF, Medico-Legal Institute, University of Milan.

27 For example, photo ID, video footage, medical documentation, X-rays, personal effects (e.g. combs, toothbrushes), information on characteristic marks (e.g. tattoos, scars), and details of surgical operations and illnesses.
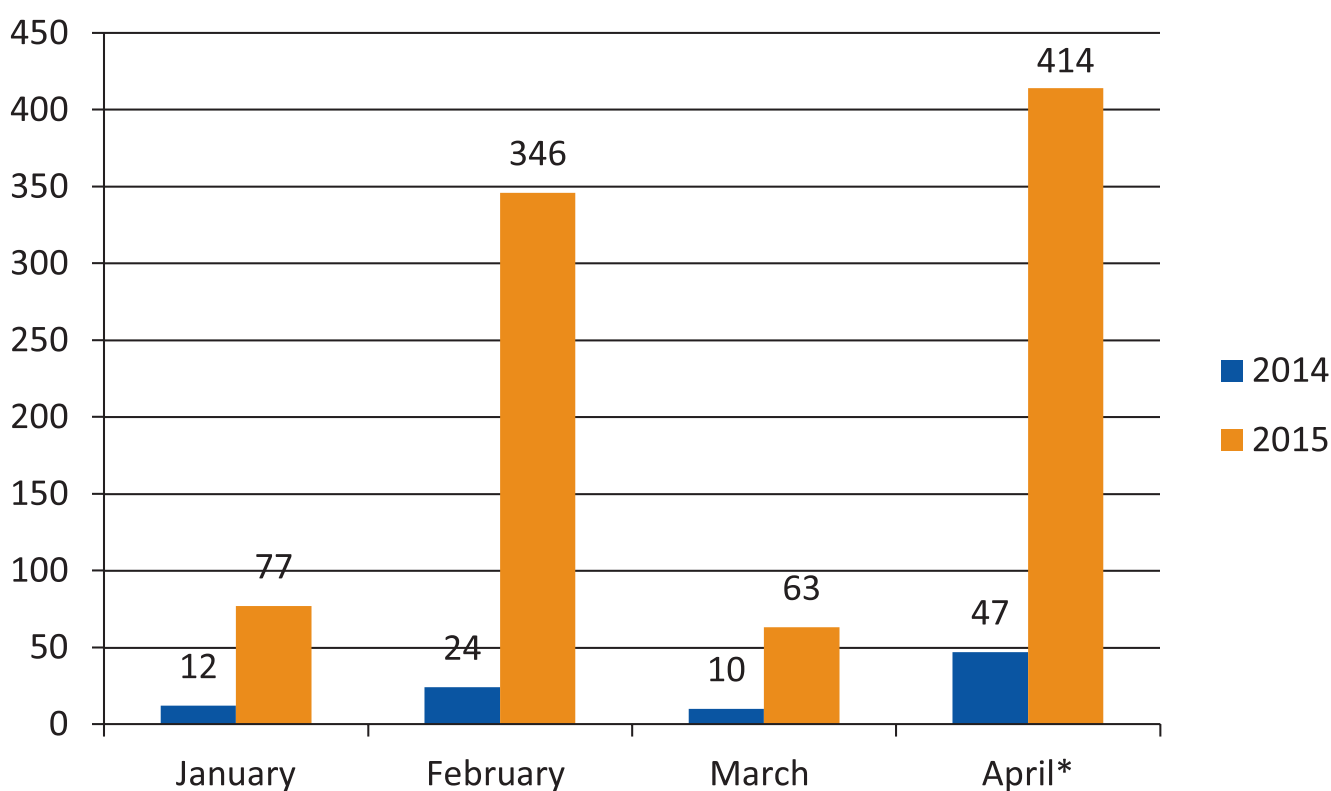
28 See http://colibricenter.org.

Conclusion

Migrant deaths at sea are unlikely to end. It will never be possible to record and identify all who die or are missing. But steps can be taken to address the present situation in which information is recorded [if at all] carelessly, randomly, in incomplete national formats or in no format, with the result that data collected in one place cannot be compared with data collected in another country, or sometimes even another part of the same country. One forensic anthropologist who works to identify those who die at the United States–Mexican border put it this way: "If this were to happen to us, God forbid, we'd want every jurisdiction possible doing everything they could to try to identify the person." ■

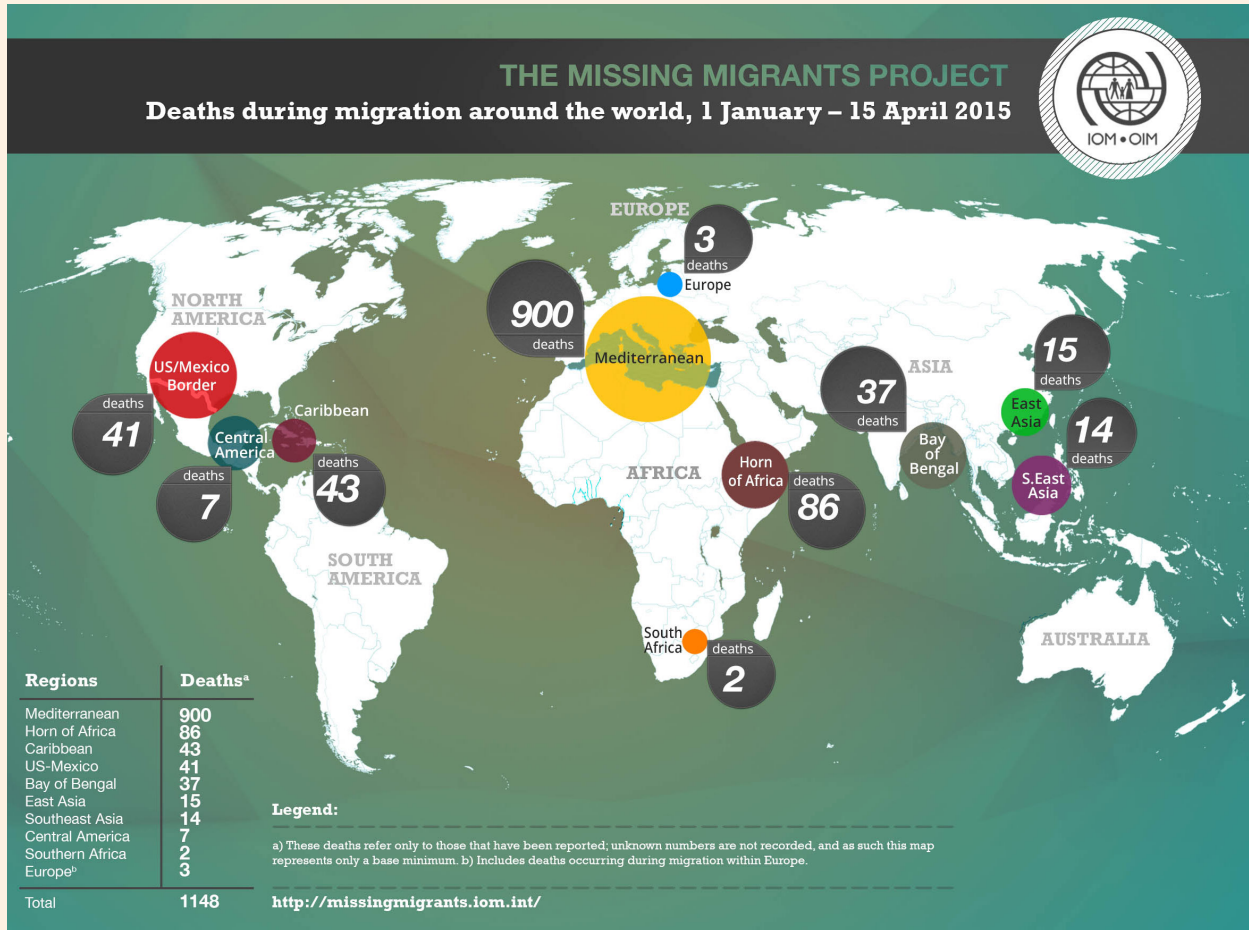**Migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, January–April 2014 and 2015**

*Data until 15 April.

"Migrant deaths at sea are unlikely to end. It will never be possible to record and identify all who die or are missing. But steps can be taken to address the present situation."

Migrant deaths: Numbers continue to increase in 2015
Tara Brian[1]

THE MISSING MIGRANTS PROJECT
Deaths during migration around the world, 1 January – 15 April 2015

Regions	Deathsa
Mediterranean	900
Horn of Africa	86
Caribbean	43
US-Mexico	41
Bay of Bengal	37
East Asia	15
Southeast Asia	14
Central America	7
Southern Africa	2
Europeb	3
Total	1148

Legend:

a) These deaths refer only to those that have been reported; unknown numbers are not recorded, and as such this map represents only a base minimum. b) Includes deaths occurring during migration within Europe.

http://missingmigrants.iom.int/

Last year a record number of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees lost their lives while migrating, with over 5,000 dying on sea and land routes around the world. This year, these numbers continue to increase, with figures already drastically higher than the same time last year. The recorded numbers are highest in the Mediterranean region, where over 900 migrants have died to date, as compared with just 47 by mid-April last year. Over the Easter long weekend, nearly 1,500 migrants arrived in Italy, the primary country of destination, and in just five days later in the month, nearly 5,600 were rescued, according to Italian authorities.[2] While these rescues have been massive in size, overall, arrival figures to Italy are similar to numbers last year, meaning the risk of death is much higher this year. Deaths are expected to increase as the weather gets warmer and the smuggling season begins in earnest. As was the case in 2014, the Mediterranean region has seen the highest number of fatalities in the world, accounting for 78 per cent of recorded deaths globally thus far in 2015, and 65 per cent last year. The majority of those dying in the Mediterranean are sub-Saharan Africans, and of the deceased whose region of origin is

---

1 Tara Brian is a Research Officer at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Headquarters in Geneva. (This article was produced with research assistance from Milen Emmanuel.)

2 See IOM, "IOM monitors latest migrant rescues in Mediterranean", 14 April 2015. Available from http://iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/news-and-views/press-briefing-notes/pbn-2015/pbn-listing/iom-monitors-latest-migrant-resc.html.

known, sub-Saharan Africans account for over 96 per cent. These migrants are mainly from Western Africa – including Nigeria, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau, among others. Others are from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, and a small number from the Horn of Africa have died at sea. Region of origin is unknown for just over 20 per cent of those who die in the Mediterranean. These counts of the dead include migrants whose bodies are found, as well as those who are reported missing. Countless others die without the knowledge of the media or international community.

The Horn of Africa – primarily the crossing from the Horn to Yemen, has seen over 80 drown this year during the voyage, up from last year's 61. Numbers in the Caribbean are nearly five times higher than mid-April last year, with more than 40 deaths thus far in 2015. While boats tend to be much smaller than in the Mediterranean and casualties from individual shipwrecks rarely as large, the latest incident off the north coast of Haiti claimed as many as 40 lives.[3] Over 40 have died along the Arizona stretch of the United States–Mexico border in the first three months of 2015, and nearly the same number are known to have died crossing the

Bay of Bengal, although this figure undoubtedly underestimates the true cost to human life, as data are extremely hard to come by. Others have died this year once reaching Thailand – some beaten by smugglers and others of poor health. Numbers fleeing Myanmar and Bangladesh have soared, reaching an estimated 62,000 last year, nearly triple the number of departures estimated in 2012.[4]

Other deaths have occurred in East Asia, Central America, Southern Africa and within Europe. Still more die along land routes in Africa, travelling through South Asia often to the edges of the European Union, and along numerous routes around the world not as visible to the public eye. It is likely that the majority of deaths go unreported and, as Stefanie Grant explains in her article in this same volume, the majority of those who die are never identified, even if their bodies are recovered.

IOM is continuing to monitor migrant fatalities and will issue a second global report on these "fatal journeys" in the autumn of 2015. More data and information on migrant fatalities around the world can be found on IOM's Missing Migrants Project at http://mmp.iom.int/. ∎

---

3   See *The Guardian*, "Haiti shipwreck: 40 migrants could be dead, US coast guard says", 10 April 2015. Available from www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/10/haiti-shipwreck-migrants-40-dead.

4   See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Regional Office for South-East Asia, "Irregular maritime movements in South-East Asia – 2014" (2015). Available from http://storybuilder.jumpstart.ge/en/unhcr-imm.
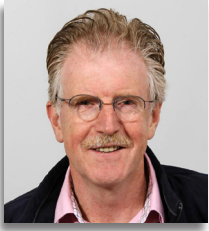
Producing and using indicators and indices in the migration policy field

Jan Niessen[1]

This paper is about the development of indicators and indices which can be used to compare and assess migration policies and to make precise suggestions for improvements. It is based on my experience with the creation of the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) and the management of the three editions of this widely used instrument, as well as on work undertaken for the European Commission. It draws some lessons from this work that may help assess the feasibility and define the scope of a global index on migration.

Can countries and policies be compared?

There are many policy actors who question the usefulness of indicators and index exercises. They argue that these tools cannot capture countries' uniqueness or the particularities of their policies. However, by contrasting countries and policies, one can identify and better understand these unique attributes. Comparing countries and policies that are the same is of limited use. Comparing those that are different enhances knowledge and learning. Nevertheless, questions remain as to whether indicators and indices are the most useful tools to employ. After all, there may be other instruments that serve that purpose better.

Do indicators simplify complex realities to the point that comparing countries and their migration policies becomes a futile exercise? What does a good or better score actually mean in terms of real life? Can qualitative migration information be reliably translated into quantitative data that is used to compare and rank countries? In other words, how scientifically sound is this method? These are all legitimate questions and finding convincing answers may help to appreciate the great value and unmistakable limits on indicators and indices. Government and non-governmental policy actors make comparisons all the time, often to defend their position. Indicators' and indices' value is that

comparisons are made systematically, scientifically and in a transparent way. However these tools have limitations – they do not tell the whole story but only help to tell and illustrate parts of the story.

Inspiring examples

The introduction of indicators into the migration field is rather recent. Both the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Council of Europe published reports on migration from the late 1980s/early 1990s. These reports hardly mentioned the term indicators nor did they use the statistical information to obtain the benefits for which they are now used, that is to capture essential information, set targets, and monitor and benchmark activities. This situation changed gradually over the last 15 years when a great number of indicator and indices were launched at the global and European levels.

Why did it take so long for indicators and indices to be introduced into migration policy debates and why were they reluctantly accepted as useful instruments? The fact that these debates are dominated by lawyers, social scientists and human rights advocates helps to explain this. These professionals and many policymakers are not very familiar with using quantitative data to describe and compare situations. However, economists have had a long history of doing this precisely. For example, a high-level summary of a country's economic state of affairs has become a well-known, widely accepted and frequently used indicator, namely, "gross domestic product" and its catchy abbreviation GDP. It took time before economists agreed on its definition and they continue to refine it so as to ensure that the concept takes into account continuously changing economic realities and accumulated knowledge. Individual policymakers, countries and groups of countries gradually adopted the concept and used it to make comparisons over time and with other countries. Today, economic policy goals are set in terms of GDP, which has become a performance indicator. Scientists, often in consultation with and at the request of policymakers, are using GDP for secondary analysis that leads to a better understanding of economic dynamics and policy

1   Jan Niessen is Director of the Migration Policy Group (MPG) in Brussels, Belgium.

impact. Critics, often referring to "not by GDP alone", have produced another very successful example of an indicator-based index. Economists again designed this index, known as the Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme.

Various factors explain the success of these two tools. They include the:

- resolve to develop and use indicators and indices;

- focus and lucidity of these tools;

- acknowledgment of scientific robustness;

- demonstration of relevancy for policymaking and policy actors; and

- proven attractiveness of the presentation of the results for a wider public.

Persistence and timing are crucial throughout the process, from making the case and developing the tools to the proliferation of their use. In developing global migration indicators, experts can learn from other index exercises on various non-economic topics, as well as benefit from the fact that policy actors have become much more familiar with such a policy tool.

European approaches

With the growing cooperation among European Union (EU) Member States on monetary and economic matters, indicators and country comparisons were introduced into European policy debates. A statistical database was set up and a joint assessment framework was developed, allowing countries to compare national situations. Indicators were used to make prospective and retrospective impact assessments. Quantitative goals were set and results were measured. This practice was extended to areas directly linked with monetary and economic policies, such as social affairs and education. However, although Member States may have been sympathetic to migration indicators, they blocked the development and use of these indicators in EU policymaking for institutional reasons. Indicators were associated with a European policy mechanism, namely the Open-Method of Coordination, which Member States did not want to expand to the migration field.

Consequently, the European Commission gave stakeholders more time to see the benefits of migration indicators. On behalf of the Commission, the Migration Policy Group (MPG) organized a seminar on indicators in the preparation of the first Handbook on Integration (2004), which contained a chapter on this topic. In 2009, the German Government and the Swedish EU Presidency organized European seminars on integration indicators. In 2010, the EU Minister responsible for integration adopted a limited set of integration indicators, which are known as the Zaragoza Indicators. Eurostat provided statistical backup. As a follow-up, the European Commission asked the MPG to undertake further research and to organize a series of three seminars for government and non-governmental stakeholders and academics from all Member States and international organizations. A final report on the research findings and outcomes of stakeholder consultations was published in 2013. This report demonstrated how indicators can be used and contained recommendations on their further development and use for policymaking purposes.

The following lessons can be learned from this process:

- High-level support was very helpful in getting the development process started. In the EU context, a supranational organization was the driving force, namely, the EU Commission. It provided leadership, made resources available and engaged experts to provide research assistance.

- Extensive European consultations over a period of several years resulted in a workable compromise on the types of indicators, their focus (a limited number of integration areas) and number. It raised the interest and mobilized support of stakeholders.

- Government and non-governmental integration actors and academics were brought together in expert seminars, making the process and its outcomes more relevant to their work. It promoted understanding of the different types of indicators: context–outcome indicators, input–output indicators, and subjective–objective indicators.

- Consistent clarification of the purposes of indicators and their use mitigated fears of hidden agendas. Indicators and country comparisons enhance knowledge and can be used for policy exchanges at the national and international levels.

- The ambition to cover many integration areas and many countries was matched with available resources to collect and analyse data and present the results in a user-friendly way.

- Support from public and/or private agencies as well as financial and other resources were

indispensable in taking this work forward (e.g. development, updating and use). Ideally, experts who would develop a global migration index would use existing infrastructure of national and international policy debates and research networks which, in turn, would be reinforced by this type of work.

Developing an index

In parallel with the efforts leading to the adoption of the Zaragoza Indicators, MIPEX was developed. These were similar but distinct processes and quite a few people and organizations participated in both, which created synergies. The development process, content and use of MIPEX is briefly described below under six headings, which concern matters that are important for developing an index and which can be applied to the development of a global migration index.

Leadership and status

Work on the first edition, of what later was to be called MIPEX, started in 2004. Three editions have been published since then and the fourth edition will be published in May 2015. The British Council, the cultural arm of British diplomacy, facilitated its development for the first three editions. It held joint leadership with the MPG (an independent Brussels-based think tank), which designed and coordinated the research and linked the initiative to an existing informal European platform of non-governmental actors. The European Commission co-sponsored two editions.

From the beginning, MIPEX was linked to a credible, creative and productive mix of non-governmental and government agencies and academics. No particular interest, be it of governments or interest groups, was served other than the shared interest in producing a reliable tool that could inform integration policy debates.

Nature and scope of the index

MIPEX has always been presented as a policy index. This tool does not measure societal integration outcomes but policy outcomes and demonstrates which policies create a favourable environment for immigrant integration. The use of outcome indicators leads one to ask which factors influence integration outcomes. The use of policy indicators leads one to ask what the impact of policies is on integration. To answer these questions, further analysis is needed, which links outcomes with policies and/or policies with outcomes. The next MIPEX edition will make an attempt to do this by statistically analysing who actually benefits from policies.

There is a fine line between migration and integration, and drawing the line can be somewhat artificial. A migration index would, for example, focus on labour needs assessment methods, recruitment procedures, admission conditions and rights of migrants. These methods, procedures, conditions and rights will have an impact on integration. MIPEX focuses on seven integration areas. Starting with four, and gradually adding more areas after feasibility studies were undertaken, they currently include labour market mobility, long-term residency, family reunion, access to education, political participation, access to nationality and anti-discrimination. At the request and with the help of the IOM, health will be added to the forthcoming edition. The first three areas would fit into a migration index and the other areas may (partially) fall under needs assessment, recruitment and associated rights.

Concepts and methodology

MIPEX uses concepts that are taken from European conventions and EU legislation. In other words, MIPEX and its country comparisons are based on an international consensus regarding terms, standards and policies. International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN conventions can serve this purpose for a global migration index. For designing an index research framework, it does not really matter whether or not these conventions are ratified. A policy index establishes to what extent national policies are closer or further away from recognized international standards.

The research or normative framework allows for the translation of qualitative policy measures into quantitative data. Experts are asked to assess whether or not certain policy measures are in place. They have the choice of three options: (1) measures are not in place or do not come close to the wording and content of international standards; (2) measures are in place but are further away from the wording and content of international standards; and (3) policies are the same as the wording and content of international standards. Quantitative-oriented social scientists are familiar with this technique, which is similar to that of designing a survey and translating qualitative data into quantitative data.

Discussions on methodology not only improved data collection and analysis, but also turned some sceptical scholars into strong supporters. A few of them started to produce their own indices. It is safe to say that the scientific validity of the exercise has not been not fundamentally challenged, and MIPEX is involved in and continues to benefit from ongoing methodological discussions.

Data collection and analysis

MIPEX tapped into the MPG's network of academics in the migration and anti-discrimination fields and gradually succeeded to engage over 100 academics in around 40 countries. Among them are law professors, practising lawyers, political scientists and sociologists. They are not asked to give their opinion but to check whether approximately 150 policy measures are in place, using official and public documents as evidence. Their assessment is peer-reviewed. There are other indices which are based on the experts' opinion and not on this kind of fact-checking. Others combine the two, which may be confusing if not properly explained. MIPEX keeps the analysis simple (accumulation of points per policy area) and translates the quantitative data back into qualitative considerations, thus telling a story of a country's more or less favourable integration climate. The results are usually the same as those of classical qualitative studies. Social scientists use MIPEX to establish correlations between various policy fields, policies and outcomes, and other factors influencing integration. The results are also used to tell the integration story and to make concrete policy proposals. The carefully applied methods and the involvement of respected scientists have given the index credibility.

Countries covered and ranked

The first MIPEX edition covered 15 EU Member States. The second edition included all EU Member States (as per 2007), plus Norway, Switzerland and Canada. The third edition expanded the geographical coverage by adding new EU Member States (a total of 27) and the United States. After that, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Croatia, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey and Armenia were "MIPEX-ed" and the results were published at the MIPEX website. Academics (in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and the Republic of Korea), non-governmental organizations (in the Balkans), governments (Mexico) and an international organization (the Organization

for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)) asked for or facilitated the MIPEX assessment (in Turkey, the Balkans and Armenia).

Countries are ranked per policy area and by total score. The scoring system is very simple and straightforward so as to avoid a numbers game. The scores immediately lead to identification of what measures are in place in which countries and assist policy actors to benchmark and make concrete and realistic policy proposals.

Consultations and presentation

Consultations with government, non-governmental stakeholders have been key in all phases of the production of the tool. They guided the choice of integration fields and specific policy measures. This made the tool relevant to their work. They mobilized support for the exercise as is demonstrated by the long list of MIPEX ambassadors. They were consulted on how to present the results, resulting in an interactive and user-friendly website, which allows policy actors to use the data for prospective and retrospective policy assessments.

MIPEX launch debates were organized, attracting the attention of policy actors and the media.

Users and use

MIPEX is being used by a variety of policy actors:

- Ministers responsible for migration and integration to retain or improve their score;
- International organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE and IOM, for the preparation of their country visits and reports;
- Agencies, such as Eurostat, to link policies with outcomes;
- Non-governmental agencies to stimulate a well-informed debate;
- Human rights advocates, for monitoring policy and making concrete proposals;
- Academics, for further research.

Some final remarks

It is desirable to design a global migration index. Such an instrument would be useful for policy actors to stimulate a focused and well-informed debate on a

very topical issue. It could be a welcome complement to the reports produced by IOM and UN agencies.

A partnership between international, government or non-governmental organizations could provide leadership and mobilize political support and funding from the private or foundation sector.

The conceptual framework of a global migration index could be based on UN and ILO conventions and existing indices that are covering related fields. The choice of indicators could be made through targeted consultations with key stakeholders. The research could be coordinated by a small team of international and experienced scholars in cooperation with universities and think-tanks. Small teams of national experts could collect the necessary data covering the various areas of the index.

The presentation and use of the tool could be promoted by intergovernmental organizations, such as IOM and the ILO. An index has the advantage over longer reports in that it is short and sharp. It could also be complementary to these longer reports. It also focuses the attention on key issues.

At the global level, there is an infrastructure of agencies that work on migration, with IOM in a leading role. The production of a global migration index could and – not to waste resources and double efforts – should tap into existing knowledge, experience and trust. Such an initiative could gather key players on migration together, which would strengthen their existing cooperation. ■

"It is desirable to design a global migration index. Such an instrument would be useful for policy actors to stimulate a focused and well-informed debate on a very topical issue. It could be a welcome complement to the reports produced by IOM and UN agencies."
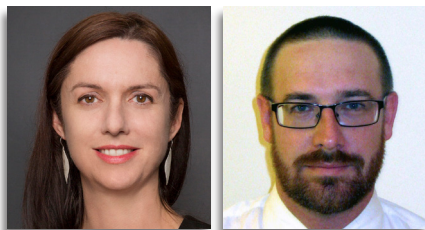
Expanding the evidence base on irregular migration through research partnerships: Australia's Irregular Migration Research Programme

Marie McAuliffe and Alex Parrinder[1]

International migration has been identified as one of the defining global issues of the twenty-first century. As Papademetriou (2005) suggests, "virtually no country is untouched by, or immune to, the effects of international migration – particularly its unauthorized variant." Yet migration policy continues to be made on limited data and evidence (Mokhiber, 2013), often by necessity.

The Irregular Migration Research Programme (hereinafter referred to as the Research Programme) within the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) represents a significant attempt to address this conundrum for policymakers. The Research Programme aims to provide high-quality, rigorous quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research to support a better understanding of the dynamics of irregular migration and their potential policy implications. The Research Programme is designed to maximize the policy relevance and sustainability of research conducted within a government context, particularly by operating within a framework of partnership and collaboration between a range of migration experts and policymakers.

Significance of irregular migration as an enduring and complex public policy issue

The multiple complex forces of globalization interact with migration dynamics to influence international migration patterns and trends. Increasing urbanization, fluctuating economic circumstances, geopolitical insecurity and conflict, development issues, population growth and demographic change all influence the movement of people, along with factors such as increasing access to transportation, telecommunications, diaspora networks, and proximity to viable migration pathways and agents. The increase in regular migration and the corresponding rise of irregular migration are argued by many commentators to have an "irresistible momentum" that is likely to continue in the future (Koser, 2005).

Within this context, irregular maritime migration is a contested topic with significant national, regional and global implications, particularly in Europe, and also in other parts of the world. This form of migration presents ongoing challenges and continues to raise compelling humanitarian, political, social, economic and security concerns. It can be daunting for policymakers to try to balance these concerns while developing effective and sustainable strategies to manage irregular migration and borders.

The need for policy-relevant research on irregular migration (and irregular maritime migration) cannot be understated. Examination of the many factors underpinning irregular movement is important to the development of a better understanding of multi-causality and its interconnected dimensions. Equally, there is recognition that policy-irrelevant research is also crucial, particularly forced migration research that looks beyond the policy frames of reference to explore less visible aspects of this form of migration (Bakewell, 2008).

As an immigration nation surrounded by sea, Australia's border-related operational capacities, both offshore and onshore, have evolved over decades to become among the more advanced in the world. Regular migration is planned and regulated in an orderly and predictable manner. Further, the dimensions, characteristics and history of international managed migration in the Australian context are comprehensively researched, and a strong evidence base exists to inform policy. In contrast, irregular migration tends to be disorderly, unpredictable and unregulated. Irregular migration ignites core concerns for governments, for which maintaining public confidence in the State's capacity to protect sovereignty and border management and programme integrity is paramount (IOM, 2003). For Australia, with

1   Marie McAuliffe is a Sir Roland Wilson PhD scholar at the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute at the Australian National University, on leave from the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), and former Director of the Irregular Migration Research Programme (Research Programme). Alex Parrinder is an Assistant Director of the Research Programme, in the DIBP. The views of the authors do not necessarily reflect those of their employers or institutions.

its lack of land borders, irregular maritime migration has become a hot-button issue. Australia is not alone in this regard; in receiving countries such as Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain, the phenomenon is high on the immigration agenda where it remains contested and contentious.

Research gap on irregular migration in the Asia-Pacific context

Part of the problem with the polemic issue of irregular migration is a lack of information and data on aspects of its manifestation and its consequences. This is particularly so in the Asia-Pacific region where information and data has tended to be fragmented, anecdotal and sometimes based on assumptions (McAuliffe and Mence, 2014). Research on the topic can sometimes reflect polarized positions. In addition, research is commonly undertaken within discrete theoretical disciplines or analytical frameworks, such as economics, sociology, demography, anthropology, national sovereignty and security, international (refugee) law and human rights (Brettell and Hollifield, 2015), which all contribute valuable insights but do not always adequately capture multifaceted and dynamic nature of migration processes, including from migrants' perspectives, that multidisciplinary research and analysis is often able to illuminate.

There is also often an emphasis on the interests and concerns of receiving countries, with less attention given to origin, transit and refugee host countries. This can inhibit a more nuanced understanding of the characteristics of populations on the move and the reasons for changing migration patterns. Further, given the largely invisible, often clandestine nature of irregular migration, the difficulty of systematically measuring and understanding movements is considerable. Data on irregular movements within the region are generally not available (McAuliffe and Mence, 2014). In other regions, such as the Horn of Africa, efforts to overcome such difficulties are bearing fruit and the scale of irregular movement, smuggling, trafficking and exploitation of migrants is being reported.[2]

The Research Programme's first Occasional Paper "Establishing an Evidence-Base for Future Policy Development on Irregular Migration to Australia", by Khalid Koser and Marie McAuliffe (2013), identified specific research gaps in the Australian context. The paper included a "toolkit" that identified key themes and research questions to guide the Research Programme. The findings of research conducted on key areas identified in the toolkit have offered a range of valuable policy-relevant insights into the dynamics of irregular migration. The toolkit continues to serve as a key reference for Research Programme priorities.

Structure and approach of the Research Programme

Established in January 2012 as part of a broader whole-of-government strategy, the Research Programme expanded significantly, following the (then) government-commissioned independent Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers. The Expert Panel (2012) concluded that "the evidence on the drivers and impacts of forced migration is incomplete, and more intuitive than factual" and that there was no "solid base of measurement and analysis" to support the policymaking process. One of the key objectives of the Research Programme has been to produce quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research to support the development of an objective an evidence base as possible. The Research Programme has continued with this clear objective while policy shifts have occurred, including as a result of a change of government in 2013. There is recognition within government and among senior officials that irregular maritime migration is an enduring and complex transnational issue, and that research investment is of strategic benefit.

In 2013, a survey of 1,008 irregular maritime arrivals (IMAs) – to whom protection visas were granted in 2011 and 2012 – was commissioned under the Research Programme. The IMA survey drew from the personal experiences of people who had travelled to Australia by sea to provide an empirical evidence base on decision-making processes throughout the journey. It was the first large-scale quantitative survey undertaken on these issues and provided valuable insights on the important role of IMAs' family, community and diaspora networks in decision-making, perceptions of Australia as a destination country and the multiple factors underpinning IMA flows.

---

2 For more information on the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), see www.regionalmms.org.

Since its establishment, the Research Programme has been carefully planned to produce research and analysis to inform policy and operational deliberations but not recommend or advocate policy. The separation from policy processes has enabled the Research Programme to operate as a distinct unit.

The Research Programme has been designed to provide research and analysis at two mutually reinforcing levels:

- applied research and analysis that is responsive to *immediate priorities* and can *inform policy and operational deliberations* on specific irregular migration issues and themes; and

- *longer-term* research to strengthen the knowledge base on why people travel irregularly to Australia, with reference to the social, political, cultural, economic, geographic, demographic and other factors relevant to their migration patterns, including within regional and global contexts and in relation to future migration pathways and trends.

> The Research Programme has commissioned large-scale quantitative survey research on potential migrants in **Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh** to examine different levels of intention to migrate (regularly or irregularly). The project includes an international comparative analysis of the survey responses. It is intended to provide insights into processes of migration decision-making by priority citizenship groups, including in a regional context. The findings from this project will have implications for both managing irregular migration and communicating to potential migrants.

The Research Programme's ability to produce applied research and analysis, including in relation to specific citizenship and ethnic groups, depends heavily on strengthening the underlying, longer-term knowledge base on issues such as migrant decision-making and comparative analysis of approaches internationally. This has involved a focus on contextualizing Australia's experience within regional and international comparative research frameworks to provide a better understanding of irregular migration to Australia. At the same time, the limitations of such research have been clearly recognized and considered in planning, conducting, and communicating the results of research and analysis. This includes limitations in terms of the utility of any single research activity for policymakers – the process of building a robust evidence base is iterative, and the different pieces of research work together to form a picture of the complexity inherent in understanding irregular migration. It also includes limitations from methodological perspectives, and in the context of research ethics, sensitivities and feasibility. Gaining ethical clearance and instituting appropriate measures to ensure that the research activity does not create unacceptable risk have been important aspects of the Research Programme.

Research sustainability – building multilayered knowledge and expertise

The Research Programme has been structured to maximize its sustainability, notwithstanding the often challenging fiscal environments that many government agencies face. To build a sustainable programme, it was acknowledged that fostering skills and expertise both within and outside government was important. Building on a departmental research and analytical function on irregular migration was a key element in the development of an integrated, multilayered programme of work designed to contribute to expanding the existing academic evidence base on irregular migration to Australia. Other key elements included:

- commissioning research, including research undertaken in partnership with international organisations (such as IOM), academic institutions, private sector specialist researchers and other government agencies;

- a multi-year Collaborative Research Programme (CRP) with the Australian National University (ANU) in April 2013, which has provided over AUD 1.5 million funding for empirical research on international irregular migration to academic researchers in Australia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka and Switzerland;

- an Irregular Migration Research Small Grants Programme, under which early career and other researchers were able to apply for grant funding;

- a peer-reviewed Occasional Paper series; and

- expansion of the existing in-house irregular migration analytical function.

To date, 17 academic principal researchers have been funded under the programme, along with private sector specialist researchers, international

organizations and think tanks. Seventeen research projects have been delivered and nine are currently underway.

> The DIBP – in partnership with Cubit Media Research – is working on a **large-scale collation and comparative analysis of media representations of migration and migrants** (including irregular migration) in selected countries. The project examines coverage and messages on migration generally, and to Australia, with the aim of providing information on relevant public perspectives and discourse, including to identify key themes and favourability of messages on migration. Being conducted collaboratively with Cubit, a private sector research company, allows the Research Programme to benefit from Cubit's unique data collection and analysis methodology, which involves analysis of individual messages by multilingual analysts and stratification of results using a proprietary human cognitive modelling system.

Bridging the gap between government and non-government expertise and knowledge

A critical aspect of the Research Programme is that it draws upon both government and non-government migration and other expertise to maximize the utility and quality of its work. As highlighted by Koser (2014), "[g]enuine collaboration and partnerships have the ability to recognise the different but complementary expertise that resides inside and outside of government. In the right circumstances, powerful and productive partnerships can be formed that are able to draw on critical thinking to address complex migration issues in a policy-relevant and strategic manner."

A number of mechanisms are in place to facilitate ongoing engagement with leading migration experts and practitioners, including Australian and international academics, representatives of international and non-governmental organizations, and senior government officials.

- Governance structures have been established via the Irregular Migration Research Advisory Group and the Irregular Migration Research International Reference Panel. Through these advisory bodies, Australian and international migration academics and experts from international and non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions in Australia, New Zealand,

Europe, the United States and Asia, as well as Australian government officials, provide advice on themes and topics of research, provide a peer-review mechanism, and bring an international perspective to the Research Programme.

- A High Level Strategic Discussions Series on Future Migration Challenges is co-hosted by the DIBP and ANU as part of the CRP. The Discussions provide the opportunity for policymakers and international migration academics and experts to explore possible approaches to priority national and global migration challenges, and to identify areas for further policy-relevant research.

- Researcher workshops are co-hosted by the DIBP and ANU to bring together policymakers, researchers funded under the programme, and members of the Advisory Group and the International Reference Panel. The workshops allow participants to discuss findings and methodologies, share insights and discuss fieldwork and other challenges, hear from policymakers about complex policy issues, identify remaining research gaps, and provide an opportunity to discuss policy utility and applied research goals.

Lessons learned through the Research Programme

To expand the existing evidence base, the Research Programme has often questioned existing assumptions about irregular migration, including by focusing on demography and its relationship to key drivers and determinants of irregular migration. This has involved seeking the views of potential and actual migrants to illuminate the complex issues of why and how they choose to migrate, and includes consideration of protection issues as well as the range of other factors that feed into decision-making about destinations and other migration options. It has also involved adapting new understandings of irregular migration through multidisciplinary approaches that are not bound by common dichotomous depictions of "genuine refugees" and "economic migrants".

Rigorous quantitative and qualitative research and comparative analysis of findings in relation to different groups and different geographic contexts have been key features of the Research Programme's approach to developing a more sophisticated understanding of actual and potential irregular migration flows to Australia, within the overall global migration context.

An independent review of the Research Programme conducted in 2014 found that the structures and relationships underscoring the Research Programme represent, in many respects, a best-practice model of "bridging the gap" to support a focus on policy utility. The High Level Strategic Discussions Series has provided a forum for policymakers to test ideas and approaches and an opportunity for migration experts and academics to provide input into policy thinking, gain insights into the challenges and constraints faced by policymakers, and discuss the difficulties involved in developing policy solutions to complex, multifaceted issues.

From a programme management perspective, it has been important to recognize the considerable value of research partnerships and to understand and respect the respective roles, responsibilities and strengths of the individual collaborators involved. The most effective partnerships have been those that, while acknowledging institutional interests, place greater emphasis on professional interests (e.g. project, programme and/or profession-based interest) and place little weight on personal interest. True collaboration is able to operate on a professional-interest basis in an environment of trust and honesty, which has the effect of neutralizing more difficult transactional issues. In seeking to collaborate on research projects, this alignment has not always occurred with all partners and difficulties have inevitably arisen. However, in nearly all instances, problems have been able to be overcome through flexibility, lateral thinking and a keen (collective) eye to quality.

At its core, the Research Programme is future-focused and aims to support a better understanding of potential implications for Australia. A deep understanding of the international and transnational environments depends on recognizing that irregular migration flows to Australia and the region are interlinked with larger migration forces, and that Australia's position as a destination country operates in the context of a dynamic and complex global migration environment. The Research Programme continues to play an important role in providing evidence to inform policy and operational deliberations as well as add to the broader evidence base on irregular maritime migration. ∎

Further information

For further information, please see the Irregular Migration Research Programme website at www.immi.gov.au/pub-res/Pages/research/irregular-migration-research.aspx.

References

Australia, Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers
2012   Report of the Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers. Expert Panel on Asylum Seekers, Canberra.

Bakewell, O.
2008   Research beyond the categories: The importance of policy irrelevant research into forced migration. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21(4): 432–453.

Brettell, C. and J. Hollifield (eds.)
2015   *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines.* Routledge, New York.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
2003   Migration in a Globalized World. 86th Session of the IOM Council, MC/INF/268, 10 November. Available from www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about_iom/en/council/86/MCINF_268.pdf.

Koser, K.
2005   Irregular migration, state security and human security. A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration. Available from www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/gcim/tp/TP5.pdf.

2014   Strengthening public confidence in migration policy and practice: The role of evidence. A paper commissioned by the 2014–15 Chair of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC).

Koser, K. and M. McAuliffe
  2013 Establishing an Evidence-Base for Future Policy Development on Irregular Migration to Australia. Irregular Migration Research Programme Occasional Paper Series, 1/2013. Available from www.immi.gov.au/media/research/irregular-migration-research/_doc/evidence-base-for-future-policy.pdf.

McAuliffe, M. and V. Mence
  2014 Global Irregular Maritime Migration: Current and Future Challenges. Irregular Migration Research Programme Occasional Paper Series, 7/2014. Available from www.immi.gov.au/pub-res/Documents/research/global-irregular-maritime-migration.pdf.

Mokhiber, C.
  2013 Day of General Discussion of the Committee on Migrant Workers: Opening remarks by Craig Mokhiber, Chief, Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch. Available from www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13258&LangID=E.

Papademetriou, D.
  2005 The global struggle with illegal immigration: No end in sight. Migration Policy Institute, Washington, D.C.

"The Research Programme continues to play an important role in providing evidence to inform policy and operational deliberations as well as add to the broader evidence base on irregular maritime migration."

Key findings of comparative research on assisted voluntary return and reintegration of migrants

Khalid Koser and Katie Kuschminder[1]

Introduction

Assisted voluntary return (AVR) programmes aimed at providing safe and humane return for migrants without a legal right to reside in a country form a central part of migration management policies in destination States. From the International Organization for Migration (IOM) alone, over 46,000 people participated in AVR programmes from over 70 host countries in 2013 (IOM, 2014). All countries in the European Union offer AVR with the exception of Poland, and most countries offer multiple different AVR programmes.

This article provides an overview of the key findings from the *Comparative Research on Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Project*, commissioned by the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection Irregular Migration Research Programme and implemented in partnership with IOM and Maastricht University. The overall aim of this project has been to inform policies and programmes for assisting the voluntary return and reintegration of migrants, including irregular migrants and unsuccessful asylum-seekers. This project set out to achieve this aim via three objectives: first, an analysis of the return decision of migrants, including irregular migrants; second, development of a framework for defining and measuring the sustainability of approaches to voluntary return; and third, an assessment of what factors determine sustainable return and reintegration.

The methodology for this study consisted of a mixed methods approach. First, a comprehensive literature review of both the academic and policy sources was completed, which identified key gaps in knowledge and evidence and formed the basis for survey design and data analysis in this study. Second, an analysis of destination countries returns data was conducted, which provided insights into the different implementation and number of assisted voluntary returnees in each country. Third, 273 semi-structured interviews were conducted with migrants and returnees across 15 countries of destination (Australia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Switzerland), transit (Greece, Indonesia, Turkey) and origin (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Viet Nam). These countries were selected for various reasons, including relevance to the Government of Australia, scale of asylum and return flows, and variety of assistance policies and programmes. In origin countries, interviews were conducted mainly with people who had returned at least 12 months prior. In transit and destination countries, respondents were identified by support agencies, and on the whole had already expressed an interest in return. Overall, significantly more men than women were interviewed and the majority of returnees were single individuals, not families.

Influencing the decision to return

In this study, the individual return decision is conceived as being influenced by: "structural" conditions (conditions in the origin, transit and destination countries); individual conditions including individual attributes and social relations; and policy interventions. Overall, respondents ranked the main categories of factors influencing their return decision as follows: by far most important were conditions in the country of destination, followed in order by individual factors, social factors, policy interventions and conditions in the origin country. Within these broad categories, the following specific variables were found to be most significant for the respondents in making their decisions: the difficulty of finding employment/no right to work; being tired of living as an undocumented migrant; a desire to reunify with family at home; the opportunity to benefit from voluntary return programmes; and job prospects at home.

1 Prof Khalid Koser is Extraordinary Professor in Conflict, Peace and Security, at Maastricht University/United Nations University – Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (UNU–MERIT). Dr Katie Kuschminder is Post-Doctoral Researcher and Migration Studies Project Manager, at Maastricht University/UNU–MERIT.

Four key findings can be drawn from these results. First, conditions in returnees' origin countries were generally not an important influence on the respondents' decisions on whether to return. This contrasts previous research (Black et al., 2004) and was a slightly unexpected finding. One potential reason for this is the fact that nearly half of respondents migrated for broadly economic reasons, and would likely differ among asylum-seekers and refugees.

Second, policy interventions are not considered a major influence on the decision on whether to return. In situations where policy interventions did have an influence, enabling policy interventions can influence the decision to return as much as restrictive policies. For some respondents, the opportunity to benefit from voluntary return programmes and the chance to wind up their affairs before departure facilitated their return decision. There is, however, a fine line between facilitating return and encouraging it. Any policy intervention in this area should be designed to allow potential returnees to make their own decisions, rather than encouraging them towards either option.

Third, the results demonstrate that other key factors influencing the decision to return are largely beyond the scope of direct policy interventions. For example, the desire to reunite with family members at home and a change of family circumstances there were also important factors in the return decision. Family members were also often involved in the decision-making process.

Finally, it is important to note that more could be done to disseminate information on return programmes, especially in transit countries. In contrast to destination countries, where most respondents knew about return programmes and from multiple sources, in transit countries almost half had not even heard of return programmes, particularly in Turkey. This is largely due to the fact that the AVR programme in Turkey is fully supported by external donor funds and has a strict mandate for eligibility. It is important not to raise the expectations of migrants, many of whom may not be eligible for limited return assistance programmes. There is a large need for return assistance in Turkey, and policymakers may consider supporting AVR in transit countries as a tool for migration management. This approach has been operationalized for many years between Indonesia and Australia.

Measuring sustainability

The literature review brought forth that there is currently no agreed-upon definition of sustainable return. Developing a framework to define and measure sustainable return was a key objective of this study and a number of considerations guided the definition adopted in this study. First, we focused on individual returnees as this was a feasible unit of analysis; however, we recognize the role the family and community may play in the return and reintegration of individuals. Second, this study did not make an assessment of the local population, and therefore cannot (objectively) compare returnees' status relative to that of the local population in this definition. The proposed definition and approach does, however, highlight the importance of self-perception and includes both subjective and objective indicators. Due to the ambiguities associated with remigration, this definition purposively excludes remigration as a part of sustainable return. In this study, "sustainable return" is therefore defined as when:

> the individuals have reintegrated into the economic, social and cultural processes of the country of origin and feel that they are in an environment of safety and security upon return.

This definition assumes that reintegration is a necessary precondition for meaningful sustainable return. It adopts a comprehensive perspective on reintegration across the dimensions of economic, sociocultural and political-security processes. This definition also highlights that the returnees must perceive they are in conditions of safety and security upon return, which should remove the impetus for remigration at least in the foreseeable future.

In order to measure sustainable return, as per the definition above, a multidimensional return and reintegration index was developed. Our index distinguishes economic, sociocultural, and political-security dimensions, and sets reintegration thresholds across each to gauge individual reintegration rates. On the whole, 37 per cent of returnees are reintegrated based on this index. Returnees showed the highest levels of reintegration in the safety and security dimension at 71 per cent, followed by the sociocultural dimension at 64 per cent, and the lowest levels of reintegration in the economic dimension at 54 per cent. Participants in different origin countries had varying levels of reintegration, with returnees to Iraq being the least likely to be reintegrated and

returnees to Viet Nam and Pakistan being the most likely to be reintegrated.

Promoting sustainable return and reintegration

Utilizing the return and reintegration index developed above, correlations were drawn to assess what factors influence reintegration based on the broad categories of individual factors, situation prior to migration, experiences abroad and situation upon return.

Several factors were assessed to have a significant relationship with reintegration. These included: having a sense of belonging in the community prior to migration; the reason for migration; the country of destination; residence in an asylum reception centre; and returning or not returning to the same community on return. Between them, these variables elicit two important findings: first, returnees who migrated for economic reasons were more likely to be reintegrated when compared with returnees who migrated for other reasons including political-security factors; second, returnees who had a sense of belonging to the community prior to migration and return to the same community after migration were more likely to be reintegrated. This suggests that although the reasons for migration are complex and often involve multiple factors, there can be a difference on return between those migrating for economic purposes and those migrating for security and political reasons. In addition, it highlights the importance of networks in the return and reintegration process, as networks are most likely a core part of the community of return that contribute to reintegration processes.

Although the relationship is not necessarily statistically significant, there are several other key pieces of information that are important to highlight. First, women were less likely to be reintegrated upon return, recognizing, however, that there were very few women included in the sample. This could be attributed to gender-specific challenges in the reintegration process and suggests the need for further research on the specific challenges of female reintegration. Second, returnees who were comfortable prior to migration were more likely to be reintegrated on return compared with those who were struggling prior to migration. This is logical in that those with more resources prior to migration are, in general, more likely to have resources on return. Third, there does not appear to be a difference in

reintegration between those whose decision to migrate was made collectively and those whose decision was made individually. This is a potential area for further research as it could be hypothesized that when migration is a family decision, reintegration is more difficult on return due to the lack of migration success; or alternatively that the family is more supportive on return as they were part of the migration decision. Both possibilities could be explored further to better understand this relationship. Fourth, it is noteworthy that although not significant in terms of reintegration, the majority of participants in the sample migrated via a smuggler. This illustrates the prominence of smugglers in the study countries and highlights the need for further research on the role of smugglers in migrant decision-making processes as well as return and reintegration.

Conclusion

While there are reservations about the scale and scope of the research, and the representativeness of the respondents interviewed, the study has brought forth several key findings, developed new relevant tools for assessing return and reintegration, and can be used as the basis for further and perhaps more extensive research. Further research is needed with a much larger sample of participants in more countries to be able to draw more concrete conclusions.

Bearing in mind these reservations, three findings in this study have surprised us most. These may simply be anomalies arising from the circumstances of this research, but they may deserve special enquiry in further research on return and reintegration. First, and contrary to a widely held policy assumption, there is no clear evidence that returnees take up AVR or other return assistance in order to avoid the indignity of deportation, with a possible exception being a small number of returnees to Afghanistan. Instead, our research suggested that a concern to be viewed as law-abiding was of greater concern to many respondents. Second, while a lack of reintegration and sustainable return clearly was one reason for prompting some returnees to consider remigration, it equally clearly was not the only factor. Understanding the causes of remigration and how policy can intervene is a pressing research question. Third, our study found that agents were largely irrelevant in return decision-making processes. On the one hand, most respondents paid agents to migrate, but on the

other hand this did not seem to impact their decision to return or experiences after return.

In terms of policy implications, a key gap in this study is determining the role of AVR reintegration packages in the overall reintegration process. All participants in this study had received reintegration assistance; therefore, we were not able to compare them with other assisted voluntary returnees that did not receive reintegration assistance. In addition, this study did not assess differences in reintegration packages such as amount received, level of assistance provided in the destination and origin countries, differences between cash and in-kind assistance, and so forth. Therefore, key questions still exist such as: Does the type of reintegration assistance matter in reintegration? This has direct implications for programme management and AVR policy design and should be explored in further research.

A second policy implication relates to the concept of mixed migration flows. This has become a highly politicized term, and opponents to this term fear that it takes away from genuine refugee claims. The results from this study are quite suggestive in showing that motivations and reasons for migration affect reintegration. Individuals who migrate for security reasons as opposed to economic reasons and also rejected asylum-seekers are less likely to be reintegrated. This is a central point that needs further exploration as to the differences in reintegration for economic versus security migrants and understandably has implications for return policies of different migrant groups.

One final consideration arises from this study for further research and this concerns access to evidence and data. In part, our literature review was based on evaluation reports provided by IOM, which are not (or at least not easily) accessible. The overview of various destination countries, to some extent, depended on data made available by governments involved in this research. We were struck by a lack of systematic tracking of returnees in several origin countries. There are implications here for the management, analysis, and publication of data and evidence by government authorities and international organizations. ■

References

Black, R. et al.
    2004 *Understanding Voluntary Return*. Home Office Online Report 50/04, Home Office, London.

Paasche, E.
    2014 Why assisted return programmes must be evaluated: Insights from the project 'Possibilities and Realities of Return Migration'. Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Policy Brief No. 5, PRIO, Oslo.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
    2014 Global Returns Overview 2014. IOM, Geneva.

"Individuals who migrate for security reasons as opposed to economic reasons and also rejected asylum-seekers are less likely to be reintegrated."

Publications
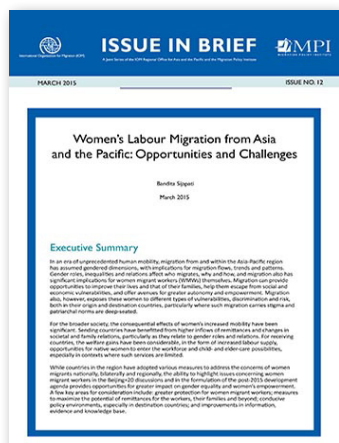
IOM-MPI Issue in Brief No. 12 – Women's Labour Migration from Asia and the Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges
2015/12 pages
English
Available for PDF download

In an era of unprecedented human mobility, migration from and within the Asia-Pacific region has assumed gendered dimensions, with implications for migration flows, trends and patterns. While gender roles, inequalities and relations affect who migrates, it also has significant implications for women migrant workers themselves.

In 'Women's Labour Migration from Asia and the Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges', author Bandita Sijapati explores the pros and cons of women's migration. The brief looks into how opportunities can be provided to improve the lives of women migrants and that of their families.This issue also describes how women migrants are exposed to different types of risks, vulnerabilities and discrimination.

This issue in brief is the twelfth in the series of policy papers by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) and the International Organization for Migration's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific that offer succinct insights on migration issues affecting the Asia-Pacific region today. To read earlier briefs in the series, visit: IOM Online Bookstore or Migration Policy Institute.
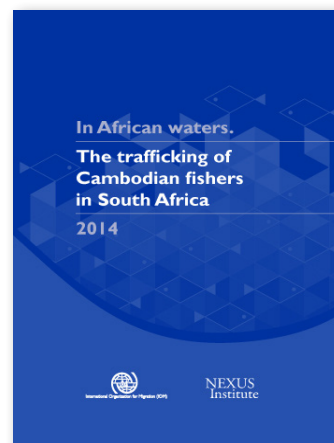
In African waters. The trafficking of Cambodian fishers in South Africa, 2014
2015/196 pages
English
Available for PDF download

This NEXUS Institute-authored study explores and discusses the experiences of Cambodian men who migrated for work in the fishing industry through a legally registered recruitment agency in Cambodia and then ended up trafficked and exploited on fishing vessels off the coastline of South Africa. While estimates on the number of Cambodian men trafficked as fishers by this recruitment agency differ, what is clear is that hundreds of Cambodians were exploited in this way. This study discusses the trafficking of Cambodian men for fishing out of South Africa and/or in South African waters – how the men were recruited and transported, as well as their trafficking experiences at sea. The study also discusses how these trafficked fishers were (or, more commonly, were not) identified as trafficking victims in South Africa and what assistance they did (or did not) receive when they escaped and returned home to Cambodia and sought to (re)integrate into their families and communities. The study, based on the experiences of 31 Cambodian men trafficked for fishing to South Africa between 2010 and 2013, is drawn from in-depth interviews with trafficked fishers and case files, as well as interviews with 42 key informants in Cambodia and South Africa. This paper is part of the NEXUS Institute and IOM Human Trafficking Research Series, funded with the support of the US Department of State, under the terms of Grant No S-GTIP-09-GR-0070.

Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Policy Brief Series Issue 2 | Vol. 1 | March 2015

The Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Policy Brief Series aims to contribute to the global knowledge base on the relationship between migration and environmental change, including climate change, and the formulation of related policy options. The series is produced as part of the Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy (MECLEP) project funded by the European Union, implemented by IOM through a consortium with six research partners.

Remittances sent to low-income countries have been noticeably increasing, and for the households of these countries, remittances often represent an important source of income. During and after disasters, remittances may become even more important to deal with emergency and recovery needs.

Drawing on a research project based in Samoa and New Zealand, this Brief provides potential policy options to integrate remittances within current disaster risk management practices. This Brief identifies the need to take into account remittance flows when designing and implementing post-disaster interventions as well as some policy measures adopted during disasters that occurred in Samoa and in other countries, and which could be replicated in other comparable settings. This Brief calls for a better understanding of the role and impacts of remittances for both receivers and senders, and also calls for greater collaboration between governments, aid agencies and the private sector.

Labour Mobility as a Factor of Development in South-East Europe: Regional Overview

Cross-border labour mobility can contribute to the improved matching of skills and jobs, transfer of knowledge and technology, increased economic productivity and employment creation. While the current economic situation and limited employment opportunities in South-East Europe pose considerable challenges for the creation of a common labour market, putting in place some of the preconditions for enabling mobility will make the region's small economies more attractive to larger domestic and foreign investors, while at the same time preparing them for future EU membership.

The Regional Overview report "Labour Mobility as a Factor of Development in South-East Europe" is a result of a joint cooperation effort between the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). Prepared in support of the implementation of the South-East Europe 2020 Strategy, the report features a socioeconomic overview of current labour mobility trends in the region written by an expert team under the RCC's coordination. The report's Part II, prepared under guidance of IOM with the financial support of the IOM Development Fund, reviews legislative arrangements governing labour mobility in South-East Europe, in terms of their comparability and compliance with international and EU legal instruments. The report has benefited from comments and views of ministries in charge of labour and employment, members of the RCC Working Group on Social Agenda 2020; ministries of interior, migration and other various stakeholders who took part in national consultations conducted in Autumn of 2014.

The RCC and IOM hope that the Regional Overview will be used by the governments in the region as they continue enhancing coordination on labour mobility regulation as a pathway towards economic growth, prosperity and sustainable development. It is expected that the report will broaden the understanding of current features and systems of labour mobility in the region, hence promoting policy actions that can lead to increased workers' mobility with the ultimate goal of enhancing well-being and prosperity for all.
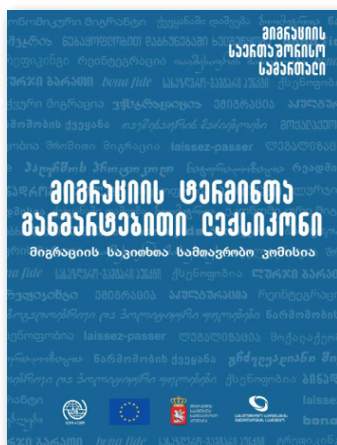
Glossary on Migration (Georgian)
2015/106 pages
English
ISSN 1813-2278
Available for PDF download

For the purpose of familiarizing Georgian officials and the general public with the terminology commonly used worldwide in the sphere of migration, the Secretariat of the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia translated IOM's Glossary on Migration into Georgian.

Since its publication in 2004, IOM's Glossary on Migration has been recognized as an indispensable resource for practitioners, government migration officials, members of academia and others.

This publication has now been translated into 18 languages and is widely used all over the world.
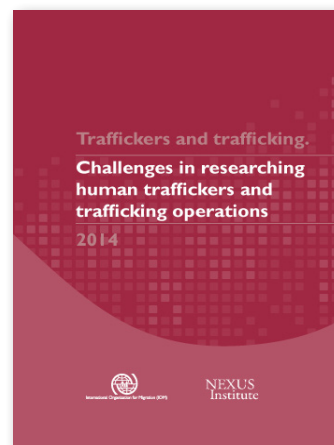
Traffickers and trafficking. Challenges in researching human traffickers and trafficking operations, 2014
2014/76 pages
English
Available for PDF download

While much research and literature exists about trafficking victims, far less is known about the persons responsible for their exploitation. A clearer picture of how traffickers operate is vital in efforts to prevent and combat the crime of human trafficking and can be used in the development of criminal justice and social welfare responses to human trafficking – informing policies, strategies and interventions. To date, much of what is known about trafficking and traffickers is drawn from information provided by trafficking victims. Because trafficked persons are key witnesses to events in the trafficking process, there are substantial strengths to victim-derived data. At the same time, there are some significant limitations to this type of information. This paper discusses some of the fault lines involved in understanding traffickers and trafficking operations through the lens of trafficked persons and their individual trafficking experiences. These limitations make clear that an improved understanding of traffickers and trafficking operations requires looking beyond victim-derived datasets to other information sources, including research with traffickers themselves. This paper concludes with a discussion on recent research efforts on traffickers and trafficking, which signal potential ways forward of improving research on this significant human rights issue and crime. These include in particular drawing on criminal justice data sets as well as engaging directly with persons involved in trafficking, each of which affords important insight into various aspects of the "other side" of human trafficking. These studies also make clear that such research is not only possible but also essential to a thorough and holistic understanding of trafficking.

International Migration is a refereed bimonthly review of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on current migration issues as analysed by demographers, economists, and sociologists all over the world. The journal is edited at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM) and published and distributed by Wiley. The editors at ISIM are responsible for the direction and content of the journal.

MPP Readers' Survey

Migration Policy Practice (*MPP*) was launched three years ago and the editors would now like to invite readers to spare a couple of minutes to participate in a short readers' satisfaction survey.

The purpose of this survey, which can be taken anonymously, is to help us identify our readers' profiles, the institutions they represent and their primary interests in our journal. The survey's responses will contribute, in particular, to adjusting and improving, as appropriate, *MPP*'s content and style, and thus the reader's experience.

Should you wish to participate in this survey, please **click here**.

Thank you.

Call for authors/Submission guidelines

Since its launch in October 2011, *Migration Policy Practice* has published over 110 articles by senior policymakers and distinguished migration policy experts from all over the world.

Past authors have included, *inter alia:*

Eric Adja, Director General of the International Migrants Remittances Observatory (IMRO) and Special Adviser to the President of Benin; *John K. Bingham*, Global Coordinator of civil society activities in the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the Global Forum on Migration and Development; *Ambassador Eva Åkerman Börje*, Chair of the GFMD 2013-2014; *Mark Cully*, Chief Economist at the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection; *António Guterres*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; *Khalid Koser*, Chair of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Migration; *Khalid Malik*, Director of the Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); *Cecilia Mamlström*, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs; *Ali Mansoor*, Chair of the GFMD 2012; *Andrew Middleton*, Director of Culture, Recreation and Migrant Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics; *Najat Maalla M'Jid*, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; *Robert A. Mocny*, Director of US-VISIT, US Department of Homeland Security; *Imelda M. Nicolas*, Secretary of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), Office of the President of the Philippines; *Ignacio Packer*, Secretary General of the Terre des Hommes International Federation; *Kelly Ryan* (Coordinator of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees – IGC, Geneva); *Martin Schulz*, President of the European Parliament; *David Smith*, Director of Surveys and Reporting, Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection; *Sir Peter D. Sutherland*, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Migration; *Ambassador William Lacy Swing*, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM); *Myria Vassiliadou*, EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, European Commission; *Catherine Wiesner*, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, US Department of State.

Migration Policy Practice **welcomes submissions from policymakers worldwide. As a general rule, articles should:**

- Not exceed five pages and be written in a non-academic and reader-friendly style.

- Cover any area of migration policy but discuss, as far as possible, particular solutions, policy options or best practice relating to the themes covered.

- Provide, as often as applicable, lessons that can be replicated or adapted by relevant public administrations, or civil society, in other countries.

Articles giving account of evaluations of specific migration policies and interventions, including both evaluation findings and innovative evaluation methodologies, are particularly welcome.

To discuss any aspect of the journal, or to submit an article, please contact:

- **Solon Ardittis** (sardittis@eurasylum.org); and

- **Dr Frank Laczko** (flaczko@iom.int)