



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Sustainable cities

Internal migration, jobs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Paula Lucci, Dina Mansour-Ille, Evan Easton-Calabria and Clare Cummings

Key messages

- Rapid urbanisation in developing countries is a defining feature of the 21st century, driven by internal migration and population growth. How urbanisation is managed by both city and national policy-makers, and the types of livelihoods that migrants can access in the city, are crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goals 8 and 11.
- Rural to urban migration has the potential to improve the livelihoods of urban migrants, their families, and contribute to poverty reduction. Internal migration opens up new job opportunities and can improve the living standards of those who remain behind through remittances, and non-financial transfers, such as improved knowledge and skills.
- Despite their potential, internal migrants are often neglected in government policies. Poor, urban migrants often end up working in the informal sector, lacking access to social protection and basic services. Few cities have coherent regulations and policies on the informal sector.
- Policies should support decent job creation and entrepreneurship, improve work standards, and provide protection and assistance in cases of abuse to strengthen the opportunities available to new arrivals.
- National and local policies that seek to curb rural to urban migration on the basis that it increases urban poverty are problematic, and largely based on a crude measure of poverty that fails to capture the reality of migration dynamics.

Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals: a briefing series

People migrate to overcome poverty, escape conflict, or cope with economic and environmental shocks. In the words of the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, migration is ‘an expression of the human aspiration for dignity, safety and a better future. It is part of the social fabric, part of our very make-up as a human family’.

Migration is one of the defining features of the 21st century and can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this to happen, we need a better understanding of the relationships between migration and key development issues – such as health, education, gender, labour and urbanisation. This series of briefs, commissioned by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), explores these relationships across the 2030 Agenda and the impact of migration on key development outcomes. The briefs are part of ODI’s work on ‘Leave no one behind: the first 1000 days of the SDGs’.

1 Introduction

Rapid urbanisation in developing countries is a defining feature of the 21st century, driven by internal migration and population growth. How urbanisation processes are managed and the types of jobs that internal migrants can access will have a great bearing on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This policy briefing focuses on the economic integration of internal migrants arriving to cities in rapidly urbanising countries. It highlights two important SDGs, from migrants’ perspectives: the promotion of full, productive employment and decent work for all (Goal 8), and making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11). This briefing synthesises the evidence on the impact of internal migration on migrants’ livelihoods, host cities’ development and overall poverty reduction. We assess how both migrants and ‘host’ cities can benefit from migration. We then put forward the policy instruments at city and national level that could help in achieving the SDGs.

Our main focus is on internal, rural to urban migration – one of the key pathways of urbanisation. People often move from poor rural areas to cities in the hope of escaping poverty. It is conventional economic wisdom that cities – because they concentrate economic activity and labour markets – are places of economic opportunity that hold the keys to further economic development and poverty reduction (Asfaw et al., 2010; Beegle et al., 2011; Tacoli et al., 2015). Indeed, in many Latin American and East Asian countries, urbanisation happened concurrently with industrialisation and access to higher productivity jobs. However, in some developing countries, particularly in Africa, urbanisation is happening without industrialisation and alongside an expansion of the informal economy. Despite this, people still prefer to move and stay in cities, which suggests that even in cases where poor rural migrants move from agricultural activities to precarious informal jobs in the city, they may still be better

off. This briefing analyses the existing evidence to consider why this is.

After reviewing the main trends of internal rural to urban migration, Section 2 highlights the SDGs on which we focus. Section 3 provides an overview of the available evidence on the impact of internal rural to urban migration on migrants’ livelihoods, on the cities that they migrate to, and on overall poverty reduction. Section 4 goes on to illustrate these impacts with two case studies across different regions (Dhaka in Bangladesh, and Accra and Kumasi in Ghana). Section 6 concludes with policy recommendations targeted at maximising the benefits of rural to urban migration and that go towards achieving the SDGs on decent jobs and inclusive, integrated urbanisation.

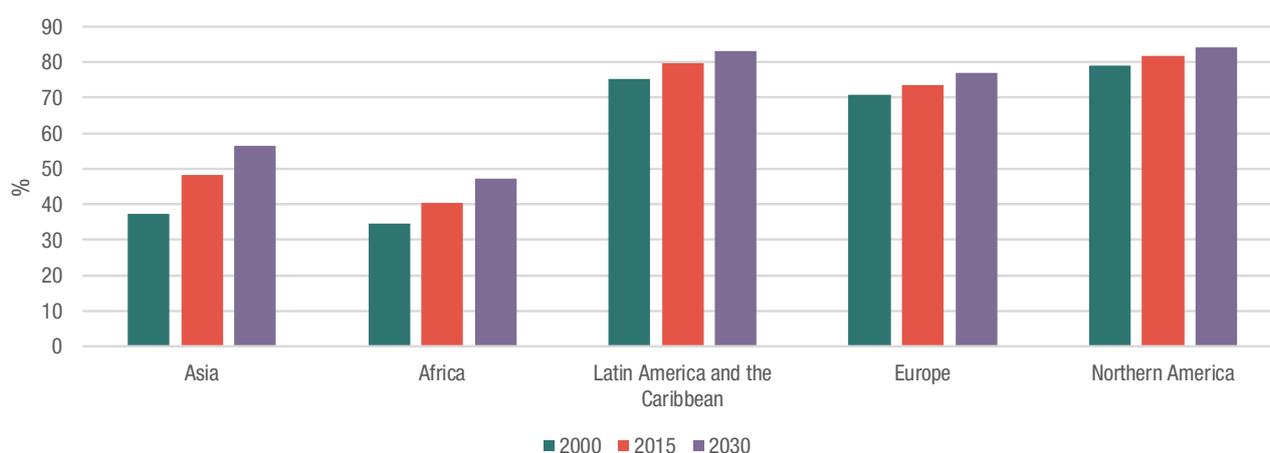
2 Internal migration trends

While international migration receives a lot of attention, internal migration is larger in terms of scale. In 2013 there were an estimated 763 million internal migrants worldwide (Bell and Charles-Edwards, 2013), three times the number of international migrants. Given that the costs of moving internally are much lower than those of crossing borders, internal migration and remittances are more likely to involve poorer people (Deshingkar, 2006; Migration DRC, 2006). As such, internal migration also has the greater potential to reduce poverty. Even if internal remittances are likely to be smaller, these individual transfers can reach a much larger number of poor households. For example, Castaldo et al. (2012) found that internal remittances in Ghana and India appear to be greater in magnitude than international ones.

Urbanisation is defined as the increasing share of population living in urban areas, and it is primarily the result of internal migration (Tacoli et al., 2015).¹ Currently, Asia and Africa have 48% and 40% of their population, respectively, living in urban areas. They remain among the least urbanised regions and are expected to experience

1. Note that there is often confusion between urbanisation (increasing the share of the urban population) and urban population growth (the result of natural increase in populations).

Figure 1. Percentage of people living in urban areas



Source: UN DESA, 2014.

the fastest urban growth in coming decades (UN DESA, 2014; Figure 1). Asian countries, such as China, Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh and Indonesia, have experienced a large increase in the share of their population living in urban areas over the last 15 years, and are expected to continue doing so between now and 2030. In Africa, countries including Namibia, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Rwanda, Mali and Ghana have also experienced a similar increase (UN DESA, 2014).

There are limitations to using the existing data on urban populations in sub-Saharan Africa, which often rely on out-of-date censuses. As a result, claims of recent rapid urbanisation in the region have been overestimated, with the reality being much more nuanced. Only some countries, such as Ghana, Cameroon and Burkina Faso fit this trend (Potts, 2013). Furthermore, census data can hide circular or temporary migration, people moving back from urban centres to rural areas as a result of seasonal work or extreme urban informality (ibid.).

Urbanisation materialises as growth in various types of settlements. Mega-cities – in particular, cities of 10 million plus residents – have received a lot of attention, in part because they are a relatively new phenomenon. There are 28 mega-cities today, up from just two in 1970, with 41 projected by 2030 (UN DESA, 2014). Many of the fastest growing mega-cities are in China and India; some are also located in fragile states, such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Egypt. Despite the attention on mega-cities, the fastest-growing agglomerations are medium-sized cities and those with fewer than 1 million inhabitants located in Asia and Africa (UN DESA, 2014). Even though they receive significant numbers of migrants, these secondary cities often receive less political attention, have fewer resources and poorer quality basic services (Ghosh, 2012). This dimension of urbanisation adds to the complexity in considering internal migration and how to better support it.

3 Internal economic migration and the SDGs

How urbanisation is managed by both city and national policy-makers, and the types of livelihoods that internal migrants can access in the city, will have a great impact on sustainable development. Goals 8 and 11 speak directly to the issues of jobs and inclusive cities. We consider them from a migrant perspective.

Goal 8 seeks to promote decent work and protect labour rights for all workers, including migrants. Target 8.8 states, ‘Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers’. Poor, internal migrants tend to work in the informal economy, often in risky environments and with no access to social protection. Policies that support decent job creation and entrepreneurship in such settings are critical to strengthening the opportunities available to new arrivals, as are those interventions seeking to improve work standards and provide protection and assistance in cases of abuse.

Goal 11 aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable for migrants and others. In particular, target 11.3 seeks to promote inclusive city planning and management, while target 11.a sets out ways of implementing this goal by supporting positive economic and social links between rural and urban areas through regional and national planning. The aim is for city and national policy-makers to include new arrivals in economic and spatial planning, and in the delivery of services. Goals 8 and 11 are inherently interrelated.

Other SDGs also relevant to the economic integration of internal migrants are included in Table 1.

Table 1: Internal migration and access to decent jobs in rapidly urbanising countries: selected SDGs

Selected targets	Why target is relevant to migration and urbanisation
Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.	Policies that support job creation and entrepreneurship are fundamental to guarantee decent work and better work conditions for migrants, and the urban poor more generally. There are debates about the extent to which formalisation is feasible in the short to medium term in cities with a large informal economy. Therefore, there is a need to also consider policies that can support better conditions in the informal economy in the short term.
8.5 Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.	Low-skilled rural to urban migrants seeking better job opportunities in the city in fast urbanising developing countries often end up working in precarious occupations in the informal economy.
8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.	
Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.	Actions that take into account the needs of poor internal migrants, and the urban poor more generally, enhance their well-being and are more likely to maximise benefits for the host city economy.
11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban ² and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.	Effective management of the challenges posed by urbanisation and internal migration require an understanding of the links between urban, peri-urban and rural economies. However, an understanding of these links is often missing in rapidly urbanising countries.
Examples of other relevant goals and targets	
Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere	
1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.	The evidence suggests that rural to urban migration contributes to economic development and to overall poverty reduction (Ravallion et al., 2007).
1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.	Due to their lack of formal registration in the city, many (poor) internal migrants cannot access social protection systems.
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.	
Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	
3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, and access to quality essential health-care services	As internal migrants are often in the informal sector they risk exclusion from coverage of insurance-based schemes and in many cases are invisible to universal health coverage programmes (Tulloch et al., 2016)
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	
4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	Internal migrants often lack the skills and training required to access decent jobs and as a result end up working in low-productivity jobs in the informal sector.
Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	
5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.	Many migrant domestic workers are female. Actions that increase the value of domestic work, including changes in underlying gender norms, would reduce women's burden of unpaid work and enhance the well-being, dignity and status of paid and unpaid care and domestic workers, including migrants (O'Neil et al., 2016).

2. Peri-urban areas are largely defined as the areas that surround our metropolitan areas and cities – neither urban nor rural in the conventional sense.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

Some countries explicitly discourage internal migration for work. The policies put in place to manage migration have a direct impact on migrants' well-being and on the host city and country economies.

10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%.

Internal remittances to poor households are often sent through informal channels as poor internal migrants do not have access to bank accounts. Such services can be riskier and more expensive.

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development

17.8 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing states. This will significantly increase the availability of high quality, timely and reliable data, disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Data on migration, particularly on internal migration, is very limited. Improving the evidence base is fundamental in order to better understand the scale and impact of internal migration, and design better policies.

4 Evidence on the impact of internal migration on livelihoods and poverty reduction

4.1 How does internal migration impact migrants' livelihoods?

The economic benefits for migrants

Broadly speaking, evidence suggests that rural to urban migrants (hereafter, urban migrants) benefit economically from moving to cities (Deshingkar, 2006). A study of internal migrants in Cambodia found that almost all were able to save money, and many also developed skills in areas such as tailoring or construction, allowing them to earn an income in both cities and rural areas (Godfrey et al., 2001). This study, like many others, suggests that, in general, urban migrants are 'winning' through migration. Wages and the ability to earn an income are also generally higher in urban areas than in rural ones (World Bank/IMF, 2013). Further still, using a wider measure of well-being, UNDP has found that internal migrants have a higher quality of life than non-migrants (UNDP, 2009).

The informality of work

Migrants from poor rural areas may find prospects in the city more financially rewarding than in the rural areas they migrated from. However, most gain employment in precarious conditions within the informal sector, often as self-employed workers,³ home-based workers, street vendors (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2004), or domestic and construction workers (de Haas, 2006; Mitra, 2010; Pattanaik, 2009; Picherit, 2012).

Incomes in the informal sector can be unstable. In Tianjin, China, only 7.3% of urban migrants have permanent jobs versus 31.8% of non-migrants, while over 50% of migrant workers have no work contract compared to 14.4% of urban workers (Lu and Song, 2006). The common practice of sending remittances to family in rural areas can contribute to a loss of income that could otherwise be used to increase a migrant's standard of living (Tacoli et al., 2015). Income instability can also be exacerbated by a number of issues, including illness or injury, discrimination in labour markets, debt bondage, bonded labour, and long-term indebtedness (for the latter, see examples on India in Breman, 1996 and Mosse et al., 2005).

Given the informal arrangements, migrant workers can be subject to exploitative or dangerous working conditions. For example, construction workers in Kathmandu, Nepal face harsh working conditions that put them at high risk of injury and sickness (Adhikari and Deshingkar, 2015); while female domestic workers in Asia have few rights in the workplace and are one of the least protected urban migrant groups (Siddiqui, 2012). Moreover, migrant workers are often not eligible for social or employment protection. Even when they are, they may not be able to obtain it because of complex and costly registration requirements, portability constraints (rather than being able to move with the worker, many social protection programmes require permanent residency) and lack of enforcement of existing laws (Hopkins et al., 2016; Adhikari and Deshingkar, 2015).

Government policy on the informal sector, particularly at city level, can have significant consequences on the livelihoods of urban migrants. Few cities have coherent regulations and policies. Instead, police and other

3. Entrepreneurship in the informal sector is highly gendered, with women often working as petty traders, food vendors, and hair dressers. Men often create work as artisans, construction workers, and motorbike drivers (Awumbila et al., 2014).

authorities 'deal with' informal workers in haphazard ways (Bhowmik, 2004; Mitullah, 2004). In Kampala, Uganda, a 2011 law enforced by the Kampala City Council Authority prohibits the selling of goods in public spaces without a business license or permit. Yet many urban migrants cannot afford business licenses, and some migrants end up paying even more than urban residents due to their migrant status. Such laws restrict the livelihoods of locals and migrants, and increase insecurity. For example, women who now sell wares at night and are therefore more at risk of rape and theft (Easton-Calabria, 2016).

The informality of residence

On top of vulnerabilities in the workplace, many urban migrants also live in fear of eviction, as the majority live in informal settlements. Many governments still perceive evictions as the main way to address inappropriate living conditions in slum areas, instead of seeing a result of the failure of planning and service provision. For example, in Zimbabwe, poor slum dwellers, many of them migrants, have been evicted from slums in Harare (UNDP, 2009). Similarly, in Ghana, migrants living in the slum area of Old Fadama in Accra are vulnerable to evictions, which are sometimes violent (Awumbila et al., 2014).

Informal settlements in the poorest areas of cities often lack access to basic services, such as water and sanitation. This can affect both migrants' livelihoods and incomes, as they often have worse health than non-migrants (Afsar, 2003) and must pay in order to obtain (typically, poor quality) basic services. For example, about 92% of urban migrants in a neighbourhood in Ghana lack access to water within their residences, meaning they have to pay to buy water and bathe (Awumbila et al., 2014). In Nairobi, Kenya, urban migrants often experience a lack of sanitation, high crime rates and malnutrition (Oucho et al., 2014). However, in Accra, Ghana, although migrants live in slums with little formal social protection, they still overwhelmingly believe their overall well-being in addition to their livelihoods, has been improved through migration (Awumbila et al., 2014).

4.2 What is the impact of internal migration on the host city?

The economic benefits for the city

There is an increasing recognition of the benefits of urban migrants, including their ability to fill labour gaps as a cheap labour force, and their resulting contributions to economies (IOM, 2015). Many industries are reliant on migrant labour, such as garment manufacturing or construction – in India, almost 90% of construction work is estimated to be carried out with migrant labour (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2004). The informal sector, where most migrants work, can also be a major area of entrepreneurship. Again, in the case of India, it accounts

for over 99% of establishments in the manufacturing sector (Ghani and Kanbur, 2012).

Despite this, it is important to note that the positive outcomes of urban migration are contextual – they depend on individual countries' economic prospects, characteristics of employment sectors and migrants' skill levels. While some research suggests that migrants may struggle more than non-migrants to find work in cities (Oucho et al., 2014), research from Bangladesh found that three out of every five migrants in Dhaka found work within one week of arrival (Afsar, 1999). A study on Dhaka estimated that the unemployment rate for working-age members of migrants' households was only 4% – half that of non-migrants in the same age range (Hossain et al., 1999). This low unemployment rate stems from a variety of factors, including Dhaka's economic and political climate and migrants' high drive to find work, which sometimes leads them to accept lower-paid jobs than locals will. Urban migrants also have high employment rates in particular cities and suburbs of Vietnam, in part due to direct recruitment from rural areas. For example, in Binh Chieu, an industrial zone ringing Ho Chi Minh City, an estimated 65% of workers are migrant labourers (Taylor, 2011).

To further increase the positive economic impact from the informal sector, some municipal and national governments have adopted policies targeting professional training to upskill micro-entrepreneurs and regulate apprenticeships, which include both the formal and informal sector. Beginning in the mid-1990s, the local government in China's Yanbian district developed policies to harness the productive capacity of both international and internal migrants, including through pre-migration skills training, encouraging capital transfer, and supporting return migrant entrepreneurship (Luova, 2014). The high remittances and other capital transfers received in Yanbian is attributed in part to these programmes, and is impressive given the low-education level of most labour migrants from the region (ibid.).

Increasing pressures on services

If local governments do not have the capacity to plan for services to meet increasing demands (or apply restrictive policies based on negative views of internal migration), this can lead to the rise of informal settlements with poor access to water, sanitation and basic amenities. Pressures on city finances compound the situation; the informal economy is rarely taxed, and there is often little redistribution from national government to the city level to deal with the backlog in the provision of amenities. In addition, poor service provision for urban migrants can affect not only new arrivals but local residents as well, and can exacerbate existing inequalities (Tacoli et al., 2015; Awumbila, et al., 2014).

For instance, in the case of Brazilian urbanisation, internal migrants and other low-income urban residents were left to live in informal settlements (*favelas*) with very

limited access to services. Now that the country's urban transition has been completed, the country has introduced policies, such as urban rights in its Statute of the City (Rolnik, 2013; Santos Carvalho and Rossbach, 2010), to reduce urban inequalities. However, these inequalities ultimately stem from how low-income migrants were treated during past urbanisation (Tacoli et al., 2015).

4.3 The wider picture: how does internal migration affect poverty reduction?

Urbanisation is, generally, a positive factor in overall poverty reduction (Ravallion et al., 2007). Rural to urban migration opens up new job opportunities to migrants (in urban areas and in rural areas), and through the role of remittances also increases the living standards of those who remain behind (Ravallion et al., 2007). Increasing evidence demonstrates the role of the informal sector in contributing to national GDP in many developing countries (Chen, 2012; WIEGO, 2013). In the case of Mexico, the informal economy is understood to have contributed about 25% to its GDP for the years 2003-2012, demonstrating its relevance to national economic growth (WIEGO, 2013).

There is also some evidence of the positive effects of entrepreneurialism on the communities that urban migrants originate from. Entrepreneurship among returning migrants has been found to be small, but the businesses they do create post-migration can have a large impact on their community through the creation of jobs, the buying and selling of local supplies, and increased trade networks to rural regions (Murphy, 2002). Similarly, many Igbo entrepreneurs – an ethnic group widely cited as the most entrepreneurial in Nigeria – purposively invest in rural areas (Osuji, 1983). Rural poverty in Igboland has declined due to the high level of entrepreneurial activities, investment, and community development in rural areas (Chukwuezi, 2001). A further positive effect of male out-migration is that left-behind women also become entrepreneurs, creating their own independent incomes (Moldova, 1997; Georgia, 1997).

Internal remittances too, play an important role in poverty reduction. Despite internal remittances being smaller in comparison than international remittances (de Haan, 1999), internal remittances can potentially play a greater role in reducing poverty (Castaldo et al., 2012). Internal migration is more common than international migration among poor households as they often lack the resources to send a family member abroad (Deshingkar, 2006). In India and Bangladesh, poverty rates in households with an internal migrant have fallen by about 50% (UNDP, 2009). Even in cases where remittances do not directly reduce poverty, they are likely to help sustain rural livelihoods and prevent people from further impoverishment (Deshingkar, 2006).

In addition to material benefits through remittances, there are further positive outcomes in other dimensions of well-being. For example, rural to urban migration can

improve migrant-sending households' living standards, and can positively impact health and sanitation in the areas of origin through migrants' increased knowledge about hygiene practices (Adhikari and Deshingkar, 2015). Families of migrants are also more likely to send their children to school, using remittances to pay fees and other costs. In Guatemala, internal migration increases educational expenditures by 45%, particularly on higher levels of schooling. Mexican children in households with an internal migrant were 30–45% more likely to be in an appropriate school grade for their age (UNDP, 2009).

National and local policies that seek to curb rural to urban migration on the basis that it increases urban poverty are problematic, and are largely based on a crude measure of poverty that fails to capture the dynamics – many of them positive – behind the movement of poor people to urban areas, such as access to more remunerative opportunities and the beneficial impact that this has on their families. A more balanced and nuanced understanding of the inter-linkages between causes and impacts of rural to urban migration and its role in poverty reduction is required (Awumbila et al., 2014).

5 Case studies

How do the positive and negative dynamics of rural to urban migration play out on the ground? Case studies from Dhaka in Bangladesh, and Accra and Kumasi in Ghana provide an illustration of the impacts of internal migration on migrants' livelihoods, the host city and wider poverty reduction discussed above. Bangladesh and Ghana are two of the fastest urbanising countries in Asia and Africa, and a number of studies have been carried out on these two countries, which provide readily available evidence on the impact of internal migration at micro and macro levels.

5.1 Dhaka, Bangladesh: migration into an unsupported, unregulated hive of activity

Dhaka is the world's fastest growing megacity and the 11th largest in the world. With an estimated 15 million inhabitants, the city's population has increased fourfold in the last 25 years. Approximately 300,000 to 400,000 migrants arrive in Dhaka each year, most of whom are poor and from rural areas (Sanderson, 2012). As agricultural production has declined, landless rural inhabitants fleeing floods, climate and food disasters have also sought livelihoods in the urban areas.

Upon arriving in Dhaka, most urban migrants become part of the urban poor. Overwhelmingly, they live in slums (*bastees*) and work in the informal sector (70% of employment in Dhaka is informal: IOM, 2010). Common jobs include street vending, rickshaw driving, petty trade, daily construction labour, hairdressing, and carpentry. Migrants who find work in the formal sector mostly work in the rapidly growing ready-made garment industry – most of Bangladesh's garment industry is in Dhaka and

the flow of economic migrants is considered a key factor in the sector's success. Other migrants find work in the construction sector, or as private domestic help (BPB, 2015).

Government policy towards rural to urban migration at both national and local levels is ambivalent. While there are no restrictions on movement to cities, national government policies and programmes do not specifically support migrants. For example, national targeted poverty reduction programmes, as well as those led by NGOs, tend to only register people living at their place of official residence. Once people become migrants, they are largely unable to access these forms of support due to both legal requirements and a need for good contact with the officials distributing entitlements. Urban migrants are thus often excluded from development and social programmes that could help lift them out of poverty (Afsar, 2005).

Furthermore, street-trading is illegal and urban authorities often harass and evict street traders, many of whom are migrants. Urban migrants are also vulnerable to eviction as most can only afford to live in informal settlements (BBS, 2014).

Due to the rapid increase of migrants, Dhaka faces a shortage of housing, an increased cost of living, overall lack of access to social services, and environmental strains such as a decreasing amount of potable water (Islam, 2015). The worsening socioeconomic conditions that have resulted from an increasing urban population are even perceived by some municipal officials as a means to deter potential urban migrants, due to the low quality of life in informal settlements (UNDP, 2011).

In sum, people migrating from declining opportunities in rural areas to Dhaka face a number of difficult challenges in establishing a life in the city, yet the overall impact on their livelihoods is positive. Despite negative attitudes towards the informal sector – threats of eviction and a lack of social protection – most migrants who arrive in Dhaka are able to survive in the informal urban economy. Moreover, internal remittances sent to family members (up to 60% of migrants' income: Deshingkar, 2006) have a significant impact on rural economic growth and play a role in reducing poverty both directly and indirectly. Institutionalising internal remittances, such as incorporating them into the country's Deposit Pension Scheme, could further increase both rural development and the savings of the rural poor (Afsar, 2003).

5.2 Accra and Kumasi, Ghana: economic policies driving labour migration to urban areas

Accra and Kumasi are the two largest cities in Ghana. Accra, the capital, has an estimated population of 2.27 million (CIA, 2012) and is the country's economic hub. Accra is the most popular destination for migrants in Ghana, who make up an estimated 55% of the city's population (Pescina and Ubaldo, 2010). Kumasi, known as the 'hinterland capital', also attracts many migrants from northern Ghana (Litchfield and Waddington, 2003).

Ghana's economic policies have played a role in incentivising the migration flow from rural to urban areas. National government liberalisation and structural adjustment programmes removed fertiliser and social service subsidies, which made engaging in agriculture less economically viable (Awumbila and Momsen, 1995; Awumbila, 1997). In addition to this, national policies favouring urban development through industrial protection meant that income levels and social conditions were better in urban than rural areas (Anarfi et al., 2003). Consequently, rural inhabitants facing declining incomes in agriculture have become a large labour supply for urban industries, mainly in and around Accra and Kumasi (Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008).

The majority (71.2%) of migrants arriving in Accra work in the informal sector (Awumbila et al., 2014). Common jobs include ice water and ice cream sellers, second-hand clothes hawkers and wholesalers, electronic waste pickers, hairdressers, maize retailers and wholesalers, construction workers, and domestic services (Overa, 2007; Osei-Boateng and Ampratwum, 2011).

While migrants may be able to create a livelihood in their host city, they experience many vulnerabilities. It is common for migrants to face frequent harassment by city authorities due to the illegal status of their work and homes (Awumbila et al., 2014). The upgrading of markets, such as the Agboghloshie and Nima, located in migrant-dense areas of Accra, would allow many more migrants to earn a living without risk of harassment on the street (Awumbila et al., 2014). Furthermore, at least half of the migrants in Ghana live in temporary shelters in informal settlements (Awumbila et al., 2014) and can face discrimination in accessing housing due to their migrant status (UNESCO, 2013). Female migrants and unaccompanied child migrants are especially vulnerable. Female migrants may resort to sex work as a means to support themselves or in exchange for housing (Osei-Boateng and Ampratwum, 2011), while child migrants commonly end up living on the streets (Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Molini et al., 2016; GSS, 2003).

Until recently, the Ghanaian national government did not have any policies explicitly targeting migration and there have often been contradictory policy responses at national and city levels. For example, while national level policies call for urban renewal and upgrading, city authorities in Accra continue to harass street vendors and pursue slum clearance (Awumbila et al., 2014). But in 2014, a National Migration Policy was introduced which sought to address these challenges through promoting 'fair settlement planning' in urban areas. This included the provision of adequate infrastructure, and managing the causes and consequences of migration flows (GoG, 2014). Similarly, the recent National Policy on Migration (2016) and implementation plan aim to increase the benefits of both internal and international migration, in part through policy coherence (GoG, 2016).

Box 1: Access to work for refugees

While the focus of this briefing is on internal migration for economic reasons, it is useful to establish parallels with access to work for refugees. It is particularly relevant given the current large numbers of refugees and the policies that governments and cities are actively pursuing to integrate refugees into their labour markets.

In Europe, cities have demonstrated greater flexibility and creativity than national governments in responding to the influx of refugees, introducing a number of job-matching and integration projects (Eurocities, 2016). Milan created reception hubs overseen by municipal employees, volunteers and NGOs to receive asylum seekers and provide them with shelter, support and information. Barcelona declared itself a 'City of Refuge' last September, with mayor Ada Colau, stating that 'It may be that states grant asylum, but it is cities that provide shelter' (Pescinski, 2016; Eurocities, 2016). In March 2016, Barcelona negotiated an innovative city-to-city agreement with three cities: Athens, Lesbos and Lampedusa. This pilot initiative aims to alleviate the pressures on these major receiving hubs by welcoming more asylum-seekers into Barcelona. London provides an example where socially-responsible businesses can address the struggles of the forcibly displaced trying to find work. The social enterprise 'Transitions' is providing refugees with job-matching services and information while the ethical underwear business 'Who Made Your Pants' is providing refugees with sewing and English classes, among other services (Forrest, 2015).

Cities and towns in the Middle East, in countries such as Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon, have to cope with far larger numbers of refugees than in Europe. In these countries, there are also examples of endeavours by governments in cooperation with other partners, to provide humanitarian assistance and to promote self-reliance and inclusion. Indeed, earlier this year, Jordan granted Syrian refugees the right to apply for work permits. This is part of a wider programme among the Jordanian government, donor countries and development actors to improve the investment climate (World Bank, 2016). Yet, after a three-month grace period ending in July 2016, fewer than 13,000 Syrians had obtained work permits out of an expected 50-100,000 (Patchett, 2016).

In other cases, there are examples of how refugees themselves can drive urban development and build parallel informal economies. For instance, Dadaab in Kenya hosts close to 300,000 refugees (Laing, 2016; UNHCR, 2016) making it the world's largest refugee camp. The difficulties of leaving the camp led to the development of an informal camp economy as Dadaab's residents opened their own businesses and started to provide services to residents and those in the host community (McKenzie and Swails, 2015). Today, Dadaab is not only considered to be Kenya's third largest 'city', but also a commercial hub with refugees running successful businesses from bakeries to boutiques providing services, products and a ready market for locals as well as a substantial tax return to the Kenyan government (Hujale, 2016). There are also a number of organisations providing livelihoods support. For instance, the Norwegian Refugee Council provides vocational training courses and recorded that 58% of its graduates are currently running successful businesses.

The impact too of internal migration on migrants' households appears to be positive. It appears that, on average, households receiving remittances have a 77% higher consumption level than non-migrant households (Molini et al., 2016). A recent survey of migrants in Ghana suggests they overwhelmingly believe their overall well-being, in addition to their livelihoods, have been improved by migrating (Awumbila et al., 2014).

6 Conclusions and policy recommendations

The movement of people within and across borders in search of better living and working conditions has been an integral part of human history. During the Industrial Revolution, rural to urban migration helped turn cities into constantly growing and transforming industrial hubs, and created opportunities for future generations.

As with international migration, internal migration occurs for a variety of reasons. In most developing countries, the search for employment and the drive to escape poverty remain the primary factors of voluntary movement. Facilitating the movement of people within

borders has the potential to improve the livelihood of individual migrants and their families through remittances and non-financial transfers, such as improved knowledge and skills. Yet despite their potential, internal migrants are often neglected in formal government policies at local and national levels. Urban migrants often end up working in the informal sector, lacking access to social protection and basic services. Host cities, in turn, experience a range of rural to urban migration effects, from potentially strengthened economies, as a result of an influx of workers, to the potential strains on infrastructure from increasing demand.

Many of the benefits of internal migration remain unrealised due to policy barriers affecting population movement, inadequate legislation enforcement to protect the rights of the poor, and social exclusion on the basis of ethnicity, caste, tribe and gender as well as an incomplete understanding of migration patterns (Deshingkar, 2006). More inclusive policies are needed to advance the economic potential of urban migration, and address migrants' insecurity of work and residence.

The recommendations below set out key actions for local and national government agencies, civil society organisations, the private sector – particularly in fast growing urban centres of the South, and those agencies in charge of monitoring the SDGs. Ultimately, how cities and government policies respond to urbanisation is crucial to unlocking and maximising the positive impacts that urban migration can have on both migrants and ‘host’ cities, and to achieving the SDGs, particularly those linked to access to decent jobs and inclusive urbanisation.

Conclusion 1: Internal migration is more common than international migration and has a larger poverty reduction potential.

Recommendation: create policies at local and national levels to enable a more balanced and fact-based understanding of the causes and impacts of rural to urban migration, and its role in poverty reduction.

- Improve the data on internal migration and remittances to challenge assumptions linking rural to urban migration with increasing urban poverty. A better understanding of complex migratory patterns, including circular migration, is needed to inform better policies. Work with existing global networks (e.g. the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data) to improve the capacity of national statistics offices and local governments to collect this data.
- Advocate for policies that support well-managed, internal migration. Government, local bodies and civil society organisations should support advocacy efforts at all levels – for example, in the implementation of the SDGs and at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). This will enable more balanced debates around internal migration.
- Governments should include analysis of urbanisation and its consequences at all levels of policy planning and implementation, and ensure coherence between them. This would allow for a better understanding of factors that drive migration in different areas, and how to better support them.

Relevant SDG targets

1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

Relevant SDG targets (continued)

10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and development planning.

17.8 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing states, to increase significantly the availability of high quality, timely and reliable data, disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Conclusion 2: The economic potential of internal migrants is underutilised.

Recommendation: Improve livelihood support to internal migrants to maximise their economic potential.

- Local governments should include the needs and vulnerabilities of informal workers in policy planning. For instance, cities’ urban planning often excludes the issue of supporting infrastructure and services for informal workers, which frequently results in the informal sector clashing with city authorities. Supporting measures by city authorities could include the upgrading of markets, which serve the job and income needs of migrants (Awumbila et al., 2014).
- The informal sector should be decriminalised in both municipal and national policies. This should also include implementing or increasing labour rights and protection for internal migrants. Examples include free legal advice and rights awareness training, particularly in sectors common for migrants such as construction work and domestic help. Where state protection is lacking, civil society organisations have a role to play.
- Internal migrants/temporary residents and returning migrants should be supported through local and national government channels, with help ranging from job searches to pre-migration training. Increase access to education and training for both rural and urban workers in line with the needs of the economy, as this has a positive influence on the wider economy and the job opportunities they can access.
- Government should work with the private sector to create banking services for the poor. This includes formalising remittance services (i.e. sending remittances through banks) and reducing their cost, especially

because remittances are likely to be sent by poor internal migrants currently using informal channels that are expensive and risky. Consider institutionalising internal remittances, such as by incorporating them into the country's pension scheme (Afsar, 2003).

Relevant SDG targets

8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

8.5 Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men.

8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

10.c Reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5%.

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and development planning.

11.3 Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

Conclusion 3: Internal migrants are often neglected in local and national policies. They end up living in informal settlements without adequate social protection and basic service provision.

Recommendation: Create and improve protective legislation and social security for migrants, including access to basic services.

- Extend state protections to the informal sector, where most migrants from poor rural areas work (e.g. pensions, access to healthcare for informal workers, including female domestic workers). Help informal workers access programmes they are already eligible for (e.g. by simplifying bureaucratic requirements and removing requirements to have resident status). Internal

migrants are, by definition, a highly mobile population so they need to be able to access social benefits that are portable.

- Focus on enforcing existing legislation, improving knowledge on social protection among migrants and making registration requirements easier to meet (e.g. not needing formal rental contracts).
- End informal settlement evictions. Many rural to urban migrants live in informal settlements and face intense disruptions to both their home life and livelihoods through the threat of eviction. Increase the capacity of local governments and programmes to upgrade informal settlements and orientate urban planning that supports access to basic services and affordable housing. Neglecting informal urban communities will not deter urban migrants from settling in these areas, as the existing conditions give them no other choice but to settle there.
- Redistribute tax revenues so that poorer localities housing more internal migrants have the capacity to provide adequate local public services.

Relevant SDG targets

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, and access to quality essential health-care services.

5.4 Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family.

10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

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Overseas Development Institute
203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ
Tel +44 (0)20 7922 0300
Fax +44 (0)20 7922 0399
www.odi.org
info@odi.org



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