

Migration governance and agrarian and rural development: Comparative lessons from China, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal and Thailand

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The purpose of this policy brief is to draw together key comparative lessons on different types of migration governance interventions in the AGRUMIG project research regions and examine how they support positive feedback loops between migration and agrarian and rural development. This exploration offers stories of success and omission. Moving beyond the elusive triple-win situation on the benefits of migration for destination and origin countries, migrants themselves and the highly politicized domain of the

migration-development nexus, our point of departure is that there are vital prospects for augmenting the positive impacts of migration for societies globally (Nyberg-Sørensen et al. 2002; de Haas 2010; Wise 2018; Bauböck and Ruhs 2022). This brief focuses on how migration governance interventions are potentially useful in maximizing the gains between migration and agrarian development in the sending communities in China, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal and Thailand.



Panoramic view over Figuiq oasis in Morocco, nestled near the Atlas Mountains (photo: Lahoucine Amzil).



Migration governance and agrarian and rural development

This brief assembles the main findings drawn from the AGRUMIG project country reports on how different migration governance interventions mediate the relationship between migration and agrarian and rural development. Thirty

intervention types are examined and organized thematically into a five-fold division, namely i) pre-departure training for migrants; ii) employment generation programs; iii) agricultural interventions to support potential migrants and returnees; iv) financial incentives for migrants and returnees; and v) rural, local and regional development initiatives (Table 1 and Box 1).

Table 1. Five-fold thematic division of migration governance interventions and countries where these are examined.

Country	Thematic division				
	1	2	3	4	5
China					
Ethiopia					
Kyrgyzstan					
Moldova					
Morocco					
Nepal					
Thailand					

Note: 1. Pre-departure training for migrants (countries examined highlighted in dark blue); 2. Employment generation programs (countries examined highlighted in sky blue); 3. Agricultural interventions to support potential migrants and returnees (countries examined highlighted in green); 4. Financial incentives for migrants and returnees (countries examined highlighted in brown); 5. Rural, local and regional development initiatives (countries examined highlighted in orange).

Box 1. An overview of interventions within the five-fold thematic division.

1. Pre-departure training for migrants

- Ethiopia: Pre-departure training program for migrant workers
- Nepal: Pre-departure training of migrants, including skill development, legal advice, and sensitization for migrants
- Thailand: Pre-departure training of migrants and protection under the bilateral agreement programs

2. Employment generation programs

- China: Government support for returnees, rural employment, and Covid-19; Support for migration and Covid-19
- Ethiopia: Rural job creation programs
- Moldova: Free economic zones
- Nepal: Employment generation programs for youth and other vulnerable communities; Supporting returnee migrants and reintegration initiatives - reintegration programs implemented by nongovernmental organizations for vocational and skills training
- Thailand: Department of Employment (DOE) - returnee reintegration project

3. Agricultural interventions to support potential migrants and returnees

- Kyrgyzstan: State Program for Irrigation Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2017–2026
- Moldova: National subsidies for agricultural producers (Ministry of Agriculture – Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture [AIPA])
- Morocco: Green Morocco Plan (project development of the natural and hydraulic heritage of the Figuig palm grove and project grouping of farmers in aggregation schemes and arboricultural cooperatives, Upper Moulouya and Eastern High Atlas, Midelt Province)
- Nepal: Agricultural interventions suitable for a labor-scarce economy
- Thailand: Young Smart Farmer (YSF) program - agricultural interventions to integrate existing knowledge and skills with innovation and the young generation

4. Financial incentives for migrants and returnees

- Moldova: Program for Attracting Remittances into the Economy (PARE 1+1); Diaspora Succeeds at Home (DAR 1+3)
- Nepal: Supporting returnee migrants and reintegration initiatives - loan program for returnee migrants and returnee migrant entrepreneurship award program
- Thailand: Loan schemes to support Thai overseas migrants

5. Rural, local and regional development initiatives

- China: Rural revitalization (balanced development); Rural medical care; Rural education
- Kyrgyzstan: Vocational trainings for people in rural areas
- Moldova: Migration and local development - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Diaspora, Origini, Reveniri (Diaspora, Origin, Return); Summer camp for Moldovan diaspora
- Morocco: Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI), International NGO Porogetto Mondo-Mlal (I am a Migrant project); Deployment of Migration Policies at Regional Level (DEPOMI)

The analyses in this brief emphasize policy recommendations structured around three pillars that advance migration as a positive opportunity for harnessing the synergies between human mobility and development.

- Pillar I. Overall policy framework and configuration

- Pillar II. Policy implementation: process
- Pillar III. Policy implementation: content

Each pillar contains a set of thematic areas with policy recommendations. A summary of the policy recommendations is provided in Box 2.

Box 2. Summary of policy recommendations.

Pillar I. Overall policy framework and configuration

I.A Integrated development

- National and international efforts toward developing integrated policies supporting agricultural development in migration-specific contexts
- National and international efforts toward mainstreaming migration as a crosscutting issue across development policies and programs

Pillar II. Policy implementation: Process

II.A Coordination and cooperation between states

- Establish mechanisms in bilateral agreements fostering cooperation between governments to enforce migrant labor rights and curtail exploitative intermediaries in developing high-remittance migration pathways
- Coordination mechanisms between governments of sending and receiving countries for pre-departure training to reach migrants in ensuring safe migration pathways

II.B Wider coverage

- Bolster national and international efforts toward a wider coverage of migration governance interventions

II.C Impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation

- Comprehensive impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation of interventions to improve the accuracy and pertinence of follow-up work

II.D Migrant database

- Develop comprehensive national policies for improving data collection and analysis on migrant returnees and establishing migrant returnees as a separate category with specific training needs to enable their reintegration into the local economy

II.E Implementing existing policies

- National and international efforts toward implementing already existing migration policies and closing the gap between policy and practice

II.F Financial interventions directly targeting migrants and returnees

- National and international efforts toward developing financial interventions directly targeting migrants and returnees

Pillar III. Policy implementation: Content

III.A Trainings in sync with skills required for jobs in destination and sending countries

- Develop policies ensuring alignment between the skills of migrants and labor market needs

III.B Employment generation programs

- Gear national efforts toward ensuring competent and remunerative salaries through employment generation programs to attract migrants and enable their reintegration into the national economies
- Strengthen national efforts toward boosting financial health and sustainability of employment generation programs.

III.C Policy design

- National and international efforts toward designing robust policies sensitive to conflicting structural, agential, and cultural political-economic dynamics
- Develop ‘inherently enabling’ and not ‘intrinsically disabling’ policy architecture
- Appropriate political settlement analysis to help design effective policies to deal with issues of contestation of power among multiple actors



Waterwheel in an on-farm canal system in Batken region, the most remittance-dependent and arid region in Kyrgyzstan. Water access is one of the main problems for farmers here (photo: Asel Murzakulova).

Policy recommendations

Pillar I. Overall policy framework and configuration

I.A Integrated development

National and international efforts toward developing integrated policies supporting agricultural development in migration-specific contexts

Integration may entail:

- Agricultural policies and programs are sensitive to the needs of households with migrants in terms of gender or labor scarcity and can potentially harness the benefits of remittance inflows.
- Agricultural programs that support potential migrants and address their challenges so they can make a more informed choice regarding investments in land or for migration.
- Agricultural programs that directly support returnees and help them overcome barriers to investment in the sector.

In this context, AGRUMIG findings reveal, for example, Morocco's oversight in mainstreaming migration in its agricultural development strategy, the Green Morocco Plan (2008–2020). The plan aimed to attract investment in Morocco's agriculture sector but does not recognize migrants as a category that could significantly contribute to agricultural investments. Similarly, Nepal's Agriculture Development

Strategy (2015–2035) does not register the needs of migrants, women, youth, or vulnerable populations. Moldova's current subvention framework (2017–2021), inspired by the national agricultural and rural development strategy, does not explicitly engage with migration issues. In Kyrgyzstan, in regions coinciding with the focus area of the State Program for Irrigation Development of the Kyrgyz Republic (2017–2026), migrant households view agriculture as a complementary source of income with a high risk of uncertainty.

While migration, agriculture, and development are seamlessly interconnected in everyday life and practice, policies are fragmented. Critically reflecting on why most policies are unimplementable, Mosse (2004, 639) argues that little attention has been accorded in international development to the relationship between “policy models and the practices and events that they are expected to generate or legitimize.” Li (2007) and Mosse (2004) suggest that policy models tend to be simplistic and not representative or derived from the economic, political, and cultural forces upon which policy implementation rests.

National and international efforts toward mainstreaming migration as a crosscutting issue across development policies and programs

In the last few decades there has been a growing consensus that migration can contribute to international development. However, there has been imperceptible progress in aligning migration and international development policy and practice to date. While the Global Compact for Migration (2018) provides a potential avenue for integrating migration

and development (Foresti 2017) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the economic contribution of migration to development, these advances do not comprehensively map migration's contribution to development outcomes. Including migrant-specific vulnerabilities in the workplace in the 2030 Agenda, for example, will be a step in this direction (Hagen-Zanker et al. 2017; Lucci et al. 2016). Thus, migration would be better incorporated into global development initiatives and integrated into regional, national and local development planning. AGRUMIG project findings corroborate this.

For example, Moldova's Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development project (short title Migration and Local Development), led by UNDP, aims to maximize the impact of migration on socioeconomic development through an enhanced institutional framework involving the diaspora. Through this intervention, national and local public authority mandates, capacities, and resources have been enhanced to provide qualitative employment reintegration services to all returnees.

Similarly, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Implementation Plan released by the government of the People's Republic of China in March 2020 simultaneously established several interventions linking migration and development under one scheme. This Plan enhanced rural employment opportunities for returnees and those staying

behind in rural China by optimizing the rural entrepreneurial environment and local employment services as alternatives to migration.

The Ethiopian rural job creation strategy in the Gamo Highlands launched in 2017 for diversifying job opportunities and addressing desperate rural out-migration decisions can be sustained by more effectively integrating rural employment and land access issues. This is because uncertain access to land has impeded implementation of the strategy. Similarly, in Nepal, the interventions geared toward supporting youth enterprises in agriculture and the rural economy have the potential to retain youth in the country—if they are implemented and coordinated with other developmental initiatives.

For example, using raw materials found locally and providing skill-based training for localized production, consumption, and investment in projects with the assistance of governmental and nongovernmental agencies can incentivize returnee reintegration into the local economy. In contrast to these examples, migration policies in Morocco, modeled on principles espoused by the European Union (EU) and international organizations, are stymied by incoherence between domestic and international mandates. Further, there is no integration between international programs combining migration and development that work in parallel in the same regions.



Livestock dotting mountain pastures, Naryn region, Kyrgyzstan. Eighty-five percent of agricultural land in Kyrgyzstan is pastureland. Livestock investment is assumed to contribute to wealth enhancement. The State Program for Irrigation Development is expected to shape livestock development through increased cultivation of fodder crops (photo: Amrita Lamba).



Thadi Jhijha village, Dhanusha district, Nepal. Agriculture in this area is dominated by subsistence production of paddy, wheat and pulses. Most land remains fallow outside of the monsoon season due to poor irrigation. Labor migration is prevalent. Female migration is non-existent. Labor shortages affect agricultural practices. For example, straw is burned, as it is cheaper than harvesting it, which requires labor. In addition, there is less demand for straw due to the decline in animal husbandry as a consequence of migration (photo: Amrita Lamba).

For example, in the Beni Mellal-Khénifra region in Morocco, there is a EU-funded Deployment of Migration Policies at Regional Level program (DEPOMI) and a joint German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and EU commissioned Strengthening Selected Moroccan Municipalities in the Management of Migration project (RECOSA). The latter is a project to reinforce local authorities' capacity to improve reception structures for migrants. However, despite being introduced in the same field and region, there is no alignment between these two initiatives.

Pillar II. Policy implementation: Process

II.A Coordination and cooperation between states

Establish mechanisms in bilateral agreements fostering cooperation between governments to enforce migrant labor rights and curtail exploitative intermediaries in developing high-remittance migration pathways

High-remittance migration pathways can indirectly impact agricultural development through remittance-based investment. AGRUMIG project findings highlight risks due to inadequate information among migrants and their employers about human and labor rights, employers' respective obligations, and other aspects of the migration process such as legal frameworks, employment opportunities in destination countries, and so forth.

For example, while bilateral agreements are often legally binding, many have faced criticism due to their failure to set minimum standards for the work carried out by migrants (Hagen-Zanker et al. 2017; Go 2007; Lucci et al. 2016). They shape the work that laborers carry out and, in turn, the flow of remittances. This is often connected to power imbalances between the governments of recruiting and sending countries.

This allows the imposition of strict controls by the former on migrant workers' movement and rights, as shown in the example of the Thailand-Israel Cooperation on the Placement of Workers (TIC) leading to human rights violations. Similarly, when legal migration channels are still open, ineffective cooperation between states can perpetuate exploitative working conditions or allow the private manpower sector to fill the gap in mediating between worker and employer (Malit Jr. and Naufal 2016). Recruitment agencies tend to worsen the vulnerability of migrants, perpetuating uneven information flows between migrants and recruiters, resulting in migrants taking up work under false pretenses (ibid.). This includes, for example, false contract information about wages and the type of work.

Regulations on the manpower sector are present, yet in many countries such as Nepal, their implementation is weak as evidenced in AGRUMIG project findings (Taylor-Nicholson et al. 2014). Similarly, in Thailand although memoranda

of understanding and bilateral agreements offer more recruitment opportunities and reduce migration costs, many migrants still use private manpower companies to find work abroad because the process is easier and faster. Migration enabled through manpower companies require high fees and often use migrants' land as collateral for private loans. As a result, migrants get unfairly paid jobs, are forced to work in poor conditions, or lose their land to these illegal companies if they cannot repay the loan.

Coordination mechanisms between governments of sending and receiving countries for pre-departure training to reach migrants in ensuring safe migration pathways

Regular and safe migration pathways have the potential to support higher investment through increased remittances received from migrants. AGRUMIG findings from Ethiopia suggest that the pre-departure trainings have significant policy implications for migration governance as they promote regular and safe migration through i) bettering relations between labor migrants and their overseas employers involving knowledge generation among migrants about employment in destination countries; ii) agreed job contracts and bilateral agreements; iii) preventing forcible apportionment of their agricultural land as collateral to borrow money from private lenders for payments to dealers facilitating irregular migration; iv) remittances channeled appropriately for family expenses and agricultural needs instead of using this money for repaying debts to release family farmland; v) savings and investment of migrants' money in appropriate ventures upon return; and vi) less expensive and more risk-averse migration avenues in comparison with irregular migration.

However, mobility restrictions related to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic prevented Ethiopian migrants from taking up jobs abroad despite completing pre-departure trainings. Absence of coordination between private recruitment agencies and government agencies that were involved in the pre-departure training programs and in dealing with the pandemic related disruptions further derailed the process of enabling these migrants to secure employment abroad despite easing of mobility restrictions. In the absence of effective coordination mechanisms, Ethiopian migrants have continued to opt for jobs abroad using unregulated or illegal migration routes. This has encouraged irregular migration in Ethiopia and left migrants vulnerable to exploitation by smugglers.

AGRUMIG project findings from Nepal show that while pre-departure trainings are designed to offer safe migration channels in theory, their uptake is often patchy. Examples include the Safer Migration Project and others offered through bilateral projects and governmental and nongovernmental organization initiatives. They also fail to reach irregular migrants. These migrants, who are primarily women, choose to transit through India where labor permits are not required under governmental policy. Hence exposing themselves to

risks such as human trafficking, forced labor in destination countries, and loss of life. Therefore, it is imperative for pre-departure trainings to reach such migrants through effective coordination mechanisms between governments of sending and receiving countries to stem the tide of irregular and risky migration trajectories.

II.B Wider coverage

Bolster national and international efforts toward a wider coverage of migration governance interventions

AGRUMIG project findings reveal the need for wider coverage of interventions to achieve intended outcomes. For example, the efficacy of employment generation programs for youth and vulnerable communities, skill development trainings and the government's subsidized loan program in Nepal have been marred by weak coverage. Government policies and programs focus primarily on outgoing migrant workers and not returnees. Similarly, DOE's returnee reintegration project in Thailand is not widely known and is considered a short-term or ad hoc project which impedes its functioning. People are less aware of Thailand's Loans for Overseas Labour Migration Project, which leaves them with private loan schemes or loan sharks. The latter are also easier to access since, unlike banks, they do not require much paperwork. AGRUMIG project findings also suggest that the Moldovan program needs to be more widely disseminated, particularly to the country's peripheral areas to help support many beneficiaries.



Migrant household in Moldova taking to beekeeping family business and tailoring activities (photo: Irina Kuznetsova).

II.C Impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation

Comprehensive impact assessment and monitoring and evaluation of interventions to improve the accuracy and pertinence of follow-up work

AGRUMIG project findings suggest that monitoring and evaluation of trainings in Nepal are unsatisfactory. For example, training centers have no data on the number of trainees who found employment. Poor monitoring and evaluation of the Prime Minister's Employment Programme was seen to contribute to its unsustainability and misuse of funds. AGRUMIG project findings from China also stress the need for substantive impact assessment of employment generation interventions to help improve their functioning. One of the main reasons for the success of Moldova's PARE 1+1 and DAR 1+3 is the inbuilt mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation prevalent in these programs.



A tractor bought by a Moldovan migrant returnee through funding secured by the Program for Attracting Remittances in the Economy (PARE 1+1) initiative (photo: Irina Kuznetsova).

II.D Migrant database

Develop comprehensive national policies for improving data collection and analysis on migrant returnees and establishing migrant returnees as a separate category with specific training needs to enable their reintegration into the local economy

AGRUMIG project findings suggest that Nepal's employment generation and skill development training programs do not regard migrant returnees as a separate category requiring a different kind of training aimed at their reintegration into the local economy. Nepal's Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security collects data on migrant workers abroad, but no information is obtained on the returnees. Similarly, Thailand has limited access to potential returnees to help connect them with the DOE's returnee reintegration program. Additionally, data on returnees and their social remittances are also inadequate. The limited visibility of migrants in data

restricts the recognition of their needs and weakens the accountability of governments and service providers (Jobbins et al. 2018), and the absence of such disaggregated data can make designing migrant-specific policies difficult.

II.E Implementing existing policies

National and international efforts toward implementing already existing migration policies and closing the gap between policy and practice

Bureaucratic apathy has contributed to poor uptake of interventions. For example, the Foreign Employment Board in Nepal lacks the initiative to ensure the country gains from the skills of migrant workers. Additionally, Nepal's Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security has no information on returnees despite an initiative launched in 2020 after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. There are no mechanisms to reintegrate migrants into the economy by providing information to develop enterprises or matching their skills with local employment opportunities.

AGRUMIG project findings indicate that several agricultural interventions in Nepal do not meet their targets due to weak implementation. This contributes to greater migration flows from rural areas and discourages return migration. Moldova's DAR 1+3 is constrained due to the cumbersome paperwork required to access grants, discouraging potential beneficiaries from applying. Thailand's YSF program is also stymied by weak implementation leading to benefits not reaching returnees. While on paper, three-quarters of the world's migrants are allowed some form of social protection through multilateral and bilateral agreements, enforcement of these agreements is poor in practice (Hagen-Zanker et al. 2017).

II.F Financial interventions directly targeting migrants and returnees

National and international efforts toward developing financial interventions directly targeting migrants and returnees

AGRUMIG project findings suggest that financial interventions directly targeting migrants and returnees can positively shape outcomes for migration and agricultural and rural development. For example, Moldova's PARE 1+1 has been an effective tool for reintegrating returnees into the national economy. The program targets labor migrants and their first-degree relatives (with Moldovan citizenship) willing to set up or develop a business in Moldova with money coming from remittances. Similarly, DAR 1+3 offers financial incentives to migrants and organizes the Moldovan diaspora to support local development. What distinguishes these two initiatives from other financial interventions are: i) PARE 1+1 and DAR 1+3 offer grants and not collateral-free or minimum-collateral loans, thus preventing further precarity and indebtedness of migrants; and ii) PARE 1+1 and DAR 1+3 have inbuilt mechanisms such as monitoring and evaluation which help ensure the efficacy and pertinence of the follow-up work. Programs that depend on offering loans are less likely to succeed due to the considerable risk associated with agricultural investments in the current economic climate.

Pillar III. Policy implementation: Content

III.A Trainings in sync with skills required for jobs in destination and sending countries

Develop policies ensuring alignment between the skills of migrants and labor market needs

AGRUMIG project findings indicate the need for mechanisms to match employment opportunities with job seekers. For example, pre-departure trainings on skill development in Nepal do not guarantee migrant workers a job in the same sector. The quality and relevance of skills-based training offered in employment generation programs in Nepal do not match the local labor market demand, and the trainings are often based on traditional curricula. Also, the duration and format of the week-long entrepreneurship training programs currently provided are far from adequate, with no long-term support for trainees to secure jobs that meet market needs. A lack of coordination between the government and the private sector has exacerbated the mismatch between skills-based training provided to workers and job demands in industries. Likewise, findings from the DOE's returnee reintegration program in Thailand highlight the necessity to create a systematic and strategic approach to facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge of migrants working abroad and to enhance the skills and qualifications of migrants so they can receive a decent salary in Thailand. Returnees hope the program will allow them to convert their work experience into a certificate they can use when applying for jobs. By contrast, participation in the TIC bilateral program led to Thai migrants securing a job in the agriculture sector in Israel, resulting in the development of their skills and knowledge in agriculture. Migrants brought their knowledge and skills in seeding, irrigation, and fertilizing back home to apply to their own farms.

III.B Employment generation programs

Gear national efforts toward ensuring competent and remunerative salaries through employment generation programs to attract migrants and enable their reintegration into the national economies

AGRUMIG project findings reveal that the Moldovan Free Economic Zones offer employment opportunities with salaries lower than the average national salaries, thus making them an unattractive avenue to pursue. Similarly, Nepal's Prime Minister's Employment Programme can be seen more as a coping mechanism than a meaningful alternative to migration. The program guarantees at least 100 days per year instead of regular or year-round employment. While the program provides a safety net for the poorest households, low-wage and unskilled jobs offer no substantive alternative to migrants seeking livelihood security through overseas employment.

Strengthen national efforts toward boosting financial health and sustainability of employment generation programs

Funding shortages challenge the otherwise moderately successful rural job creation program in the Ethiopian Gamo Highlands. Similarly, in Nepal, a paucity of funds has marred

the implementation of skill development trainings to enable the reintegration of returnees into the local economy through programs such as the Youth and Small Enterprise Self-Employment Fund and the Micro-Enterprise Development Programme for Poverty Alleviation. The DOE's budgetary constraints have impacted the implementation of the returnee reintegration project in Thailand, as a consequence of which only those with connections to high-level authorities from the Ministry of Labour and a small number of migrants can avail themselves of this scheme.

III.C Policy design

National and international efforts toward designing robust policies sensitive to conflicting structural, agential, and cultural political-economic dynamics

AGRUMIG project findings reveal that poor design of policies contribute to their inefficacy. For example, the State Program for Irrigation Development of the Kyrgyz Republic is stymied by quality control, analysis, and planning constraints. For instance, the program envisages improvement of some 100,000 hectares (less than 10% of the current irrigated land area). However, it is unclear how the government will raise employment in agriculture by 55% (245,000 new jobs according to the program) if the irrigated land area is improved by only 10%.

Another factor contributing to the failure of interventions is the conflicting objectives of different interventions in the same region. For example, in Morocco, differences are noted in the objectives of the two projects linked to setting up drip irrigation and reviving polyculture in the Figuig oasis. The former focuses on technical aspects and the latter on environmental considerations, sustainable development, and safeguarding heritage and biodiversity. AGRUMIG project findings suggest that differences in the proposed agricultural models of these two projects have led to their ineffectiveness. Moreover, conflicting perspectives of actors involved in interventions can contribute to their inefficacy. For example, in Morocco, ethnically based local and diaspora associations are involved in the Figuig oasis projects. This has created a coordination problem between actors from local associations in Figuig and diaspora associations in France, and these differences in identities have impacted project outcomes.

Develop 'inherently enabling' and not 'intrinsically disabling' policy architecture

Despite the gains achieved through PARE 1+1 in Moldova, one of its main limitations is the financial cost, which affects its financial sustainability. The incentives provided to beneficiaries are too low to generate scaling-up of economic activities. It is difficult to start a business relying only on PARE 1+1 funding. Start-up capital is an important condition for the success of activities financed through this program. Similarly, the Moldovan program DAR 1+3 is constrained due to the small number of grants provided to recipients, which is insufficient to start a business from scratch and generate a scaling-up of economic activities.

These challenges are exacerbated by the fact that migrants often return to the country for short durations and then engage in other short-term migration experiences to earn money for their new businesses. They are stuck in a vicious cycle, and the goal of attracting migrants back is not achieved. Moreover, the high level of financial literacy needed to access PARE 1+1 resources and the cumbersome paperwork needed to access DAR 1+3 grants discourage potential beneficiaries from applying.

In Nepal, migrant workers lack the skills, training, and resources to prepare business project proposals that can be funded by local banks. The government has not made it attractive for private financial institutions to offer collateral-free or minimum-collateral loans to enterprising youth. Often, migrants are unable to repay loans and end up losing their land. Accessing loans on high interest rates for migration using Thailand's Loans for Overseas Labour Migration Project has led to indebtedness among returnees. Some returnees worry about losing mortgaged land plots if they are unable to repay their loans.

Appropriate political settlement analysis to help design effective policies to deal with issues of contestation of power among multiple actors

Fostering rural development and offering grants may prevent out-migration, encourage returnees' reintegration into the economy and boost agricultural investments, as illustrated in the rural and local development initiatives targeted toward migrants, returnees, and the diaspora in Moldova and Morocco. However, such successful interventions risk failure due to the conflicting interests of various actors involved in the power dynamics. For example, JMDI in Morocco offers

an excellent illustration of global interagency partnerships involving UNDP, International Organization for Migration, International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization, UN Women, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and Moroccan national, regional and local partners. It is funded by the EU and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The presence of so many actors has led to power struggles and disputes representing different interests. A political settlements analysis becomes significant in this context wherein powerful elites or actors arrive at deals on cooperation to enable more inclusive political arrangements and a just accommodation of diversity (Khan 2013; DFID 2012). Thus, the ways in which the political context determines how interventions impact (or not) development outcomes are relevant to addressing development failures.

Conclusion

A comparative analyses of research findings from China, Kyrgyzstan, Ethiopia, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal, and Thailand, and the policy recommendations, signal that the ways in which migration governance mediate the relationship between migration and agrarian and rural development are clearly not a monolithic group. The migration agenda seems to be characterized by a divergence of needs and priorities. These disparate aspects can inform cooperation between states to strengthen the global governance of migration toward positive agrarian and rural development outcomes for sending communities to help buck the trend of 'leaving something behind'.



Irrigation system in Figuig oasis, Morocco. Date cultivation is predominant here. Most land is abandoned and dry due to property division and declined water supply. A new date orchard plantation has mushroomed here based on an agro-industrial model and drip irrigated by groundwater and the Sfeissif dam. Herder communities and returning migrants are involved in this endeavor, which is sponsored and implemented by Moroccan state elite networks (photo: Lahoucine Amzil).

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Second AGRUMIG Project Meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal, December 2019 (photo: CESLAM team, Nepal).

AGRUMIG Policy Brief Series

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AGRUMIG Project

The project titled **AGRUMIG 'Leaving something behind' - Migration governance and agricultural & rural change in 'home' communities: Comparative experience from Europe, Asia and Africa** proposes an integrated approach to migration governance to address the two-way relationship between labor mobility and changes in agriculture and the rural sector. Migration creates challenges for rural 'sending' communities in low- and middle-income countries, yet it can also be transformative. The project engages in a comparative analysis of seven countries (China, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal and Thailand) to identify the economic, institutional, cultural and agroecological factors which shape these relationships. It will identify the range of governance interventions that can harness migration to stimulate sustainable, gender equitable growth in agriculture, and reduce the distress associated with migration.

Donor: European Union (EU) Horizon 2020 Framework Programme (H2020) under grant agreement number 822730

(Call: Towards forward-looking migration governance: Addressing the challenges, assessing capacities and designing future strategies)

Project website: <http://agrumig.iwmi.org>

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