

AUGUST 2004

Mainstreaming migration in Southern Africa

Summary of key findings

Objectives

Southern Africa is a region on the move. Longstanding patterns, forms, and impacts of internal and cross-border migration have undergone major restructuring in the last two decades with considerable implications for sound migration management, livelihood strategies of the poor, human rights observance, and poverty and inequality reduction policies.

This briefing examines the shifts in migration patterns in Southern Africa since 1990, considering their implications for immigration policy reform, pro-poor development initiatives, and poverty and inequality reduction. The briefing is based on research conducted on the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a whole and the countries of Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe where DFID has particular interests. The research was commissioned by the Migration Team within the Policy Division of DFID, and seeks to inform policy, further constructive debate and suggest measures for mainstreaming migration in development.

General findings

The end of apartheid, the integration of South Africa with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and SADC's reconnection with the global economy has brought a major increase in legal and undocumented cross-border flows and new forms of intra-regional mobility. Growing rural and urban poverty and unemployment have pushed more people out of households in search of a livelihood. One aspect of this has been the feminization of poverty in rural Southern Africa and a significant gender reconfiguration of migration streams.

Southern Africa has experienced a major depletion of its human resource base through emigration ("brain drain") over the last two decades. South Africa and Zimbabwe are most affected. No countries have developed successful retention strategies or offsetting immigration strategies. Migration is a critically important survival strategy for hundreds of thousands of households throughout the region. This reality is rarely recognized in policies directed at poverty and inequality reduction.

HIV/AIDS has also impacted considerably on migration. Not only is the rapid diffusion of the epidemic itself inexplicable without reference to the mobility of people but new forms of migration are emerging in response.

Recurrent civil strife in the rest of Africa has generated mass refugee movements and new kinds of asylum seeker to and within the region. The cessation of hostilities and threat has confronted countries of asylum with issues of repatriation and integration.

Implications for UK policy

Supporting regional integration and cooperation within Southern Africa is a major goal of SADC and is itself consistent with NEPAD objectives. Migration is a significant cross-cutting issue in the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP).

Regional policy forums such as the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA) represent an important vehicle for promoting regional inter-state dialogue, migration policy harmonization and raising the national and regional profile of migration as a development issue.

Research, policy and migration training is fragmented and non-systematic. A regional migration network of research and policy organizations, NGOs, CBOs, and migrant organizations (akin to the DFID-supported SARPN) would raise the profile of migration, facilitate the collection of sound information on migration dynamics and impacts, and provide training and capacity-building. Such a network requires a hub at a South(ern) African institution.

Implications for country offices

Migration is recognized as a critical issue within many governments but has not been systematically integrated into pro-poor development planning and strategies.

Development projects and programs specifically targeted at mobile populations have not been a major feature. Migrants are the incidental beneficiaries or victims of other interventions (e.g. rural development, trade policy, food security programmes etc.). Mainstreaming migration means foregrounding migrant populations and communities as viable agents of self-development. Migration data collection and analysis is out-dated and unusable to policy makers in many countries. Initiatives to build a local sustainable capacity for migration information collection and analysis (within and outside government as appropriate) are under way.

Migration and the poor

The extent to which rural and urban households engage in internal and cross-border migration to maintain incomes and reduce risk has been seriously under-estimated in Southern Africa. The lack of integration of migration impacts into poverty and inequality reduction strategies is one unfortunate consequence. Not only is better information needed on the poverty reduction potential of migration, but concrete strategies need to be developed to assist migrants and migrant households to maximize the benefits of migration (e.g. through support of migrant and refugee associations, burial societies, micro-credit facilitation, rural cooperatives, and migrant SMEs).

Migration and HIV-AIDS

The relationship between migration and HIV-AIDS is increasingly clear. Migration is a vector for disease transmission, but mobile populations are particularly vulnerable to infection. DFID has

been a leader in recognizing this reality in its programming in several countries. A review of past experiences and programs would assist the development of appropriate models of prevention, peer education, palliative care and treatment roll-out. At the regional level, the development of the Partnership for HIV-AIDS and Mobile Populations in Southern Africa (PHAMSA) is an important new research, policy, advocacy and networking possibility deserving of support. Finally, there is a significant dearth of capacity in the management and evaluation of HIV-AIDS project programming, leading to poor implementation and results, especially in migrant communities. Training initiatives to build capacity could enhance outcomes associated with improved management of the epidemic.

Migration and policy reform

Several countries in the region have recently overhauled or are in the process of reforming outdated immigration and migration laws. The quest for greater control underpins these initiatives. Migration policy and legislation needs to be read and reformed in ways that facilitate economic development and alleviate poverty. The development and implementation of new migration policy needs to be given a pro-poor optic to assess the implications for the poor.

Where these consequences are negative or non-facilitative, they need to be brought to the attention of policy-makers and adjustments sought. At the regional level, SADC and COMESA have both developed plans for greater freedom of movement along the EU model. Individual countries have been wary of this process. A systematic regional study of the positive and negative implications of freedom of movement is urgently required.

Knowledge gaps

The amount of basic information on migration causes, consequences and impacts has grown considerably in recent years. South Africa is particularly well-researched in this regard; other countries less so.

A long-term governmental capacity for collecting nationally-representative migration information at the household level needs to be developed. National migration household surveys conducted at regular intervals would provide invaluable data on migration/poverty connections but also allow monitoring of change over time. National statistical offices, working in a regionally coordinated fashion, would be the best location for such a venture.

The lack of reliable data on the numbers and transnational connections of Southern Africans living abroad is an obvious gap. The potential of the diasporic connections in facilitating development has not been addressed.

Regional economic integration and harmonization of migration and immigration policies is a matter of urgency for the Southern African region. The likely impact of greater freedom of movement within SADC is unknown. A systematic study of this issue would help countries make a realistic assessment of consequences.

The relationship between HIV-AIDS and migration is beginning to be understood. Greater knowledge of these connections is required. A sounder knowledge base would assist in the development of workable models.

Next steps

A key output of this review is the development of a framework which could assist development agencies and partners in the prioritisation of knowledge generation and policy reform in relation to migration. Migration needs to be systematically mainstreamed in all government programmes in relation to poverty and inequality reduction. Practical programmes need to be developed to ensure that the benefits of migration are maximized for the poor.

Regional governmental and non-governmental initiatives at migration cooperation (MIDSA, PHAMSA, SAMP) could be fostered and made sustainable. The development of a migration policy network within Southern Africa is an important next step in mainstreaming migration and maximizing the potential benefits of migration for the poor.

Further reading

Campbell, C. (2003). *Letting Them Die: How HIV/AIDS Prevention Programmes Often Fail*. London, James Currey.

Crush, J. and McDonald, D., eds. (2001). "Evaluating South African Immigration Policy After Apartheid" Special Issue of *Africa Today* 48(3).

Majodina, Z., ed. (2001). *The Challenge of Forced Migration in Southern Africa*. Pretoria, Africa Institute.

McDonald, D., ed. (2000). *On Borders: Perspectives on International Migration in Southern Africa*. New York and Cape Town, St Martin's Press and SAMP.

McDonald, D. and Crush, J., eds. (2002). *Destinations Unknown: Perspectives on the Brain Drain in Southern Africa*. Pretoria, Africa Institute.

Southern African Migration Project (SAMP), Migration Policy Series and Migration Policy Briefs, <http://www.queensu.ca/samp>

SAMP (Southern African Migration Project)

The Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) was established to encourage and support new regional approaches and policies on migration, poverty reduction and development. SAMP is an international partnership network linking organizations in Canada and partners in eight SADC states. SAMP is committed to networking, collaborative research, training, public education and policy development on migration issues. The Project is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

How to contact us

For more information on SAMP, please contact:

Southern African Research Centre
152 Albert Street, Queen's University
Kingston ON, Canada K7L 3N6

tel: +613 533 6964

fax: +613 533 2171

or

Idasa

PO Box 1739, Cape Town 8000
South Africa

tel: +27 (0) 21 461 25 59

fax: +27 (0) 21 461 2589

email: samp@post.queensu.ca

web: www.queensu.ca/samp/

This guidance is part of the Policy Division Info series. Ref no: PD Info 023. © Crown copyright 2004. Any part of this publication may be freely reproduced providing the source is acknowledged.