

Moving Forward:
International Migration and
Development Prospects in Asia

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Asia: A Region in Motion

- A region of intense and diverse migration flows since the 1970s
 - A primary source region of permanent migrants in traditional countries of settlement
 - Presently, India, China, and the Philippines are major source countries
 - Various waves of refugee migration
 - Prominence of labor migration
 - Unauthorized migration is substantial

Asia: A Region in Motion

- Labor migration is firmly in place
 - 1970: labor migration to the Middle East, mostly male
 - 1980s: intraregional migration stepped up, esp. in Southeast Asia; start of female migration
 - 1990s: start/resumption of highly skilled migration
- Labor migration: strictly temporary and limited integration for the less skilled; permanent residence and family reunification for the highly skilled

1. Development Implications of International Migration

- Different migration flows imply different nature and levels of migrants' inclusion in the origin and destination countries
- Varying development implications: remittances, brain drain/brain gain issues, role of transnational communities in the development of their home countries

1. Development Implications of International Migration

- Examples of “success stories”
 - Taiwan, from brain drain to brain gain
 - S. Korea, from country of origin to country of destination
 - China and the overseas Chinese
 - *Role of the government in all three cases*
 - *Return of scientific talent & entrepreneurs in Taiwan and S. Korea; investments & entrepreneurs in the case of China (also India)*

1. Development Implications of International Migration

- Labor migration (less skilled): brain gain?
 - Vulnerability of migrants, esp. women migrants
 - Unauthorized migration, inc. trafficking in human beings
 - Return migration is a given
- Migration of the highly skilled: brain drain?
 - Migration of nurses (Philippines); migration of ICT (India)
 - More research needed on other highly skilled
 - Student migration, a precursor to future brain drain
- Migrants & transnational communities as development partners

2. Recent Initiatives: International Migration and Development

- Extending the “nation” to the diaspora via absentee voting, dual citizenship – ex. Philippines (2003)
- The overseas population as partners in development– ex. Commission on Filipinos Overseas’ Link for Philippine Development Program (since 1989); Singapore International Foundation’s Overseas Singapore Program
- Celebrating the diaspora – ex. India’s Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (Non-Resident Indians Day) held every 9 January; various commemorations in the Philippines, also migrant workers as the new heroes

2. Recent Initiatives: International Migration and Development

- Examples from NGOs/Migrants' Associations/Others
 - Encouraging migrant group savings and investing these for small businesses or projects in communities back home
 - Targeted donations, disaster relief, medical missions
 - Private organizations tapping overseas-based population (focus: permanent migrants)
 - *More documentation is needed; need to quantify "collective remittances"*
 - *Migrants' decisions vs. "real" needs; sustainability; challenge of jobs generation; local development*

3. Prospects of Co-Development in Asia

- Limited and of recent vintage: government-to-government discussion on labor migration
- Discussion and cooperation has focused on regulating the movement of people (legal migration); common ground in curbing unauthorized migration, esp. trafficking
- In general, a “benign neglect” of migrants’ rights
- From regional integration to co-development: a long shot?