



# Migration and Development

Professor Ronald Skeldon  
*Development Research Centre  
on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty*

## Growing Debate

Why migration and development and why now?

Can migration be ‘managed’ in a way that supports development?

## Conceptual Issues

How do we define ‘migration’ and ‘development’,  
and how are these concepts connected?

## Key Topics 1

The multi-dimensional nature of migration:

Controlling factors of migration are multiple.

Cause and effect relationships are difficult to determine.

# Critical weakness

The majority of migrants are excluded from the debate on migration and development.

How to integrate international with internal migration?

Urbanization: a missing link.

## Key Topics 2

**Migration transitions:** as countries develop, out-migration tends to increase, although such trends may diminish over the longer term. Highly-developed countries may have high rates of emigration, pointing to a link between development and increased mobility.

## Key Topics 3

**Remittances:** although they have been linked with poverty reduction and development, remittance flows reflect patterns of migration and may not have much impact on the poorest people or poorest regions in developing countries.

## Key Topics 4



**The highly skilled:** out-migration of the skilled is seen to hinder development, yet efforts to restrict such movement are problematic. In the case of health workers from developing countries, in particular, there are additional issues including a lack of workers in rural areas, working conditions which prompt flight from the sector and questions about the place of training.

## Key Topics 5

**The diaspora:** some diaspora groups have played a significant role in development but this has occurred in instances where widespread development was already occurring. It is unreasonable to expect these groups to stimulate development if there is nothing for them to invest in, or return to.

## Key Topics 6

**International labour migration:** promoting worker mobility by creating temporary migration programmes could stimulate development, but such policies are likely to be politically contentious.

A clash of ideologies?

## Conclusions

Given its multi-dimensional nature, it is unlikely that migration can be easily manipulated to promote development. However, as migration is an integral part of development, policies should be formed with an awareness of what their implications for migration might be.

A need for migration-impact statements?