

YPWC
Final Report



Final Report

Development through Communication :

Connecting Youth to the 3rd Global Forum on Migration
and Development

The 2nd Annual Youth Consultation on Migration by Young People We Care

Background



Addressing international migration concerns has become a pressing and increasingly visual issue in recent times, not only for governments but also for a broad range of actors in both North and South countries, including civil society organizations, non-profits, and labor or migrant advocacy groups. Over the past few decades, political, economic, social and demographic changes in many parts of the world have uprooted many people and stimulated migration. The growing volume of trade, faster and cheaper transport, and easier communication have allowed and encouraged more people to migrate within and across national borders.

Young people are particularly likely to migrate; out of an estimated 214 million international migrants globally in 2008, young people between 15 and 30 years of age comprised “a large share” – between 31 and 39 million migrants. Seeking better educational and employment opportunities and often relying on networks of migrant friends and family, youth face more pressure to migrate than other demographic groups. Rising numbers of youth in developing countries have led to high unemployment rates and lower wages. At the same time, aging populations in developed countries require more young labor, creating apparent job opportunities for youth who have access to the information. Youth may keep in contact with friends and relatives who are part of existing migrant networks more easily through expanding access to information and communication technologies, heightening their own desire to migrate.

As the largest subgroup of migrants, youth shoulder both the benefits and the dangers of migration. Because many countries, particularly developed ones, restrict legal opportunities to migrate even in light of heavy labor demand, many young people continue to migrate using dangerous transportation methods and with scanty information about their destination, leaving them open to injury or exploitation. The past two decades, especially, have seen a dramatic increase in the trafficking of girls and young women, who are often lured into prostitution. Other young people who are impoverished and uneducated and who may be members of indigenous, ethnic minorities, rural or refugee groups are also vulnerable to this form of exploitation.

The Report of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development (2006) calls for priority to be placed on:

- 1) When migrants have rights to social services and their rights as workers are protected, their integration is generally facilitated.
- 2) Most vulnerable persons in developing countries are generally women and young people (youth). Special attention is required for these two categories of people because they can seriously be at risk of exploitation or trafficking.

Background

Young people need to be involved in discussions about migration and its effect on the development goals of both individual countries and the world at large. Their perspectives should illustrate how policies on migration affect the youth of today, and how they could better help to spark sustainable, locally-relevant development.



Aside from sheer volume of migrants, youth migration has become the subject of great controversy regarding the migration-development nexus. On the one hand, there is concern over the apparent 'brain drain' in the developing world as well-educated young people leave their home countries, attracted by improved educational and career prospects in the West. Between 50 and 80% of highly educated citizens from several small countries in Africa and the Caribbean live abroad.

On the other hand, remittances are an important source of income for many developing countries. In 2007, remittance flows were estimated at USD 337 billion worldwide, USD 251 billion of which went to developing countries. This figure is more than twice the level of international aid. Additionally, young migrants frequently return to their home countries equipped with skills, qualifications and economic resources. A new study by the World Bank postulates that remittances to developing countries are forecast to fall from an estimated \$305 billion in 2008 to \$290 billion in 2009; however, they will still outstrip private capital flows and official development aid. Remittances are "resilient" because many migrants are unlikely to leave their adopted countries due to high travel costs, and many will continue to send money home. However, some migrants may even rely on family members in their home countries to support them if they cannot find work.

Despite comprising a significant percentage of international migrants, young people largely lack the means to share their experiences. One UNFPA report laments that "little is known of the full diversity and complexity of young people's international migration... Young people remain largely invisible in research, public debates and policy about international migration."

The report highlights two specific issues: one, there is very little data on young migrants' experiences. Second, and partially as a result, young migrants often lack ways to contribute to global debates about the policies that affect them.

The 2009 GFMD organizers have sought to include more perspectives in this year's policy discussion through the use of similar online and web-based initiatives "to encourage and facilitate the interaction and wider participation of interested citizens, involved stakeholders, dispersed migrants and their organisations." Yet youth may not stumble upon these official sites by themselves; their views remain under-represented.

This consultation attempted to bridge the communication gap between youth and migration debates, recognizing their centrality to current migration dilemmas. The project provided a tangible link for young people willing to share their views and a policy development forum, allowing young people to share their views and giving policymakers a window into youth experiences.

Methodology

The Youth Consultation on Migration and Development initiative had four main goals:

1. To develop an improved understanding of global migration trends and its facets among young people at global, regional and national levels;
2. To encourage, promote and facilitate youth participation in debate and meetings on International Migration and Development;
3. To stimulate new thinking on broader issues of global migration;
4. To organize and represent the youth voice with key youth statements at the 2009 Global Forum on Migration and Development in Athens and at other relevant policy and research events.

This year's consultation is the second, following last year's "Enhancing International Migration Discussions: The Role of the Youth in the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development." As we did last year, YPWC utilized the online forum TakingItGlobal (TIG) to host the consultation. After creating a blog for the topic on the site, an email listserv was used to recruit contributors, who responded to discussion questions posted online and sent out via email. Involvement was also sought via the UNICEF Voices of Youth's, group page "Facebook" at <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1037991850>, and through the listservs of other relevant youth networks, civil society groups, community-based organizations and non-governmental organizations.

YPWC additionally sought to involve young people in rural areas who do not have access to the Internet, through the National Focal Points of UNICEF Rural Voices of Youth (UNICEF-RVOY).

The Youth Consultation on Migration and Development specifically targeted young people below the age of 35 years but welcomed all participants, with the aim of including voices from both genders, and both rural and urban areas. Despite making special efforts to recruit members of diaspora migrant organizations, we appear to have been unsuccessful in that regard.

Participant demographics

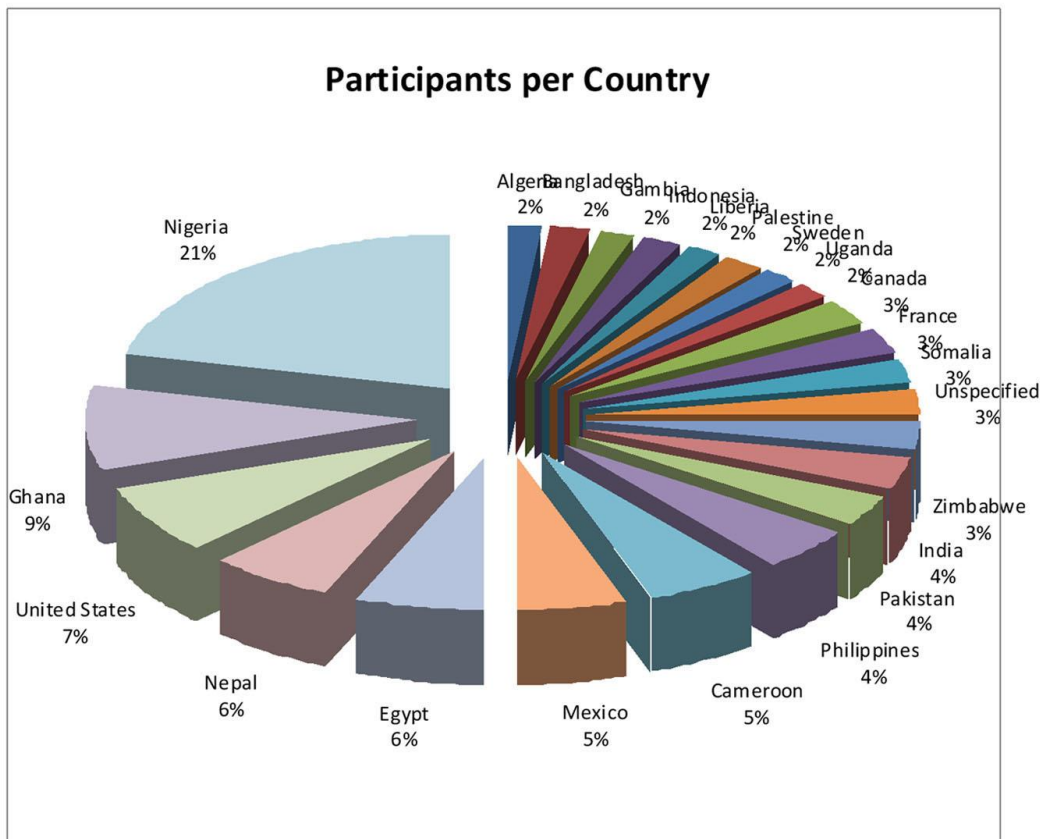
This is the second year YPWC conducted the Online Youth Consultation on Migration, allowing us not only to show distribution of participants' country of origin, age and gender but also to compare it with the data gathered during last year's consultation. (See Report on the Youth Consultation on Youth Migration. 2008)

During the 2009 consultation we received answers from ten different participants, some of whom contributed responses each week, and some of whom contributed only once. There were far more participants this year in the TIG forum itself, however. This year's consultation has gathered more people than the first consultation. Last year there were 90 TIG members and 9 non-TIG members, while this year we have 150 TIG members and 26 non-TIG members. The increase in the number of participants shows the expanding interest of people in all over the world, even if they are not answering the questions provided during the consultation. The increase of interest in this topic is noticeable.

Participating countries

This year there were participants from 61 different countries. Last year people from 48 countries were involved.

Chart 1. Number of the Participants per Country.



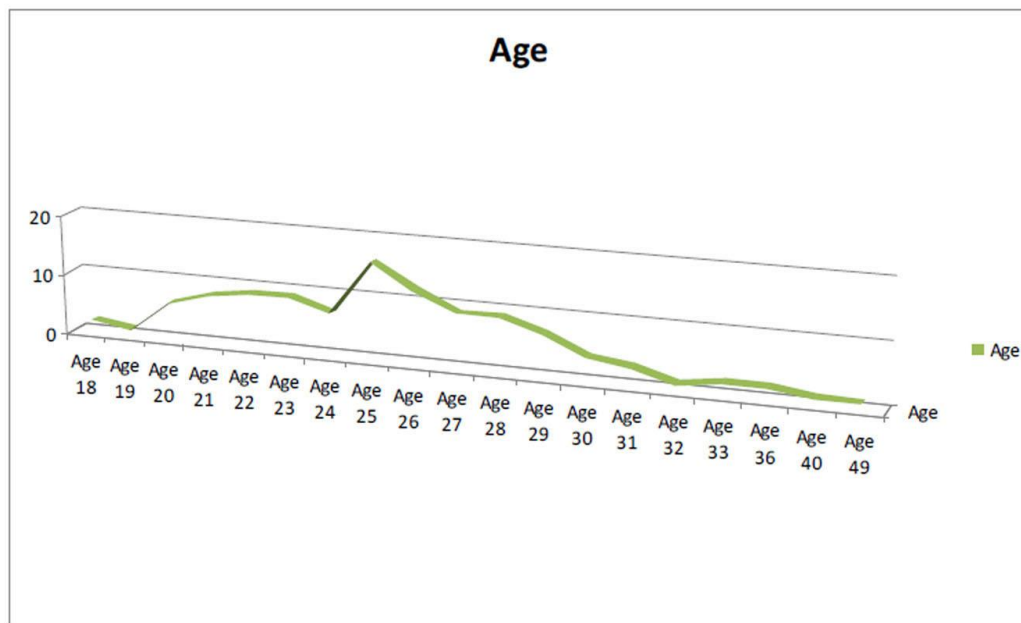
* Only participants of TIG were counted. Moderators were excluded to estimate the right number of the official members.

The remainder of participants are from the following countries: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Benin, Colombia, Congo DR, Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guyana, Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Syria, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Tanzania, Thailand, Uruguay, Zambia (one from each).

Again we have gathered people from all over the world who showed their interest by signing up to the consultation on TIG website. We can still notice that in comparison with the previous consultation, where most participants were from Nigeria and Ghana, the most active participants in 2009 came from Cameroon, Nigeria, Mexico, and Liberia.

Distribution by age

Chart 2. Participant age distribtuion



* Only participants of TIG were counted. Moderators were excluded to estimate the right number of the official members.

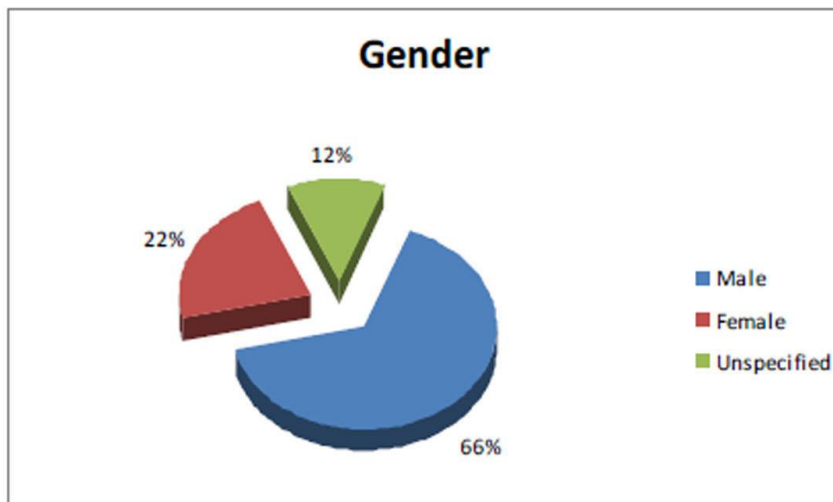
Compared to the last year, this year we have had a wider range of age groups. The age frame starts at 18 and ends at 49. We might also notice that the respondents who have actually participated and expressed their opinion belong to age frame starting at 21 and ending at 49.

The most active were participants between 29 and 30 years old.

Distribution by gender



Chart 3. Participant gender distribution



* Only participants of TIG were counted. Moderators were excluded to estimate the right number of the official members.

The gender ratio stayed the same as last year. The majority of participants were males, while this year many participants did not specify their gender. Out of 10 respondents we had two females who expressed their opinion at least once during the whole consultation period.

We would like to stress that these three main indexes were used to determine some similarities between this year's and last year's consultations and to note the changes. We can conclude that this year we gathered more people who illustrated their interest in this global consultation.

It shows that people care about global migration and related migration policies and that this interest is growing.

Themes and Responses

Participants were surveyed over the course of three weeks on three themes. Their responses to each week's questions are below.

Theme One: Making the Migration-Development Nexus Work for the Realization of the MDGs

1. Overview of the Issue

Migration's impact on development is a popular issue worldwide; the upcoming Global Forum on Migration and Development is the result of several years of international meetings recognizing that migrants contribute to the development of their home and host countries in creative and integral ways.

Youth migrants now make up a majority of all migrants worldwide, yet their experiences are largely excluded from migration policy and migration debates. Affected by all of the Millennium Development Goals, youth are the target of many MDG-based interventions, and they are also the engines who will determine the success of the MDGs in the future. Yet young migrants themselves lie on a nexus of personal development; independent and energetic enough to consider migrating internationally for work, they are still susceptible to exploitation and emotional distress from their moves. Migration policies must consider both of these possibilities, creating policies which help migrants harness their energy to channel migration benefits for development, and easing the sense of isolation or vulnerability that young people (or indeed any person) would feel upon moving to a new place.

2. Questions

1. What is the best way that migrants can contribute to their home communities, in your opinion?
2. How do we ensure that migration policies are child-, youth-, and gender-sensitive?
3. What MDGs can you think of that are directly affected by migration (e.g. the spread of HIV/AIDs)?
4. How could young people get involved in making migration work for the achievement of the MDGs?

3. Responses

Five participants responded to the questions. Their answers showed similarities in several areas.

a. Contributions of migrants

Economic

Migrants often send remittances back to their family and friends, through financial institutions such as banks, money transfer services such as Western Union, and as cash. Financial remittances now account for more money than foreign aid and foreign direct investment combined. Migrants may also bring new goods with them when they travel across borders. Some forms of technology, such as computers and networking tools, are difficult to acquire in developing countries due to trade laws and high tariffs, and international travelers may introduce them to their host countries. The same may be said of new skills. It may be easier to get a degree in networking or computer programming in a foreign country, for example, so young people may move abroad to acquire training. With a combination of money, goods, and skills, entrepreneurial young migrants may be instrumental in starting new sectors in their home countries, such as computer and technology businesses, telecommunications companies, or financial firms.

Themes and Responses

“Of course the way they contribute is with money. I can tell you that in my country, remittance from migrants in the US is one of the strongest fields of economy.”
- Andrea Arzaba, 20, Mexico

“[Migrants] can contribute both financially, socially and can also improve upon the standard of living of their family and community. They can create business that go a long way to solve a need like that of communication e.g. cyber cafes. They can also take part in some infrastructural development of the environment, they can import technology which is the back [bone] of most economies.” - Jude Thaddeus, 21, Cameroon

Cultural

Nearly all respondents believed that migrants contributed culturally to both their home and host countries. Migrants may share new types of music, art, or popular culture. They may open restaurants and groceries that make or import new types of food. They may form cultural groups to maintain a sense of cultural identity or to celebrate important festivals and holidays in their home countries, sensitizing host countries to these occasions in the process. When families migrate, they may introduce new forms of childrearing and family organization to their host countries.

“Cultural exchange is a major thing (in my own opinion) that a migrant can contribute to his/her home community.” - Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

“[Migrants] contribute also by trying to bring the best from the community they are working in, without losing or being ashamed of their real identity.” - Andrea Arzaba, 20, Mexico

“[One benefit is the] sharing of ideas which make the "country migrated to" more progressive as well as those that can be applied to the migrant's own country would be a worthy contribution.” - Roli Mahajan, 23, India

One respondent believed that not all cultural exchange was appropriate, however, echoing the view of some citizens in host countries who believe that incoming migrants bring traditions that “dilute” the host country's culture.

“Cultural exchange is also an important contribution but sometimes the country which is absorbing from its migrant population picks up habits which might not fit their climate, geographical or other limitations.” - Roli Mahajan, 23, India

One respondent also shared one way that immigration and travel laws can hinder the sharing of knowledge, information, or goods with others:

“Immigration laws seriously hinder the benefits of migration. I recall traveling to the U.S. (under the Fulbright Fellowship programme) in the mid 1980s and the Nigerian immigration seriously disturbed me as I carried a soup ingredient (famous in Nigeria) I was to share with my friends in the U.S. If not that I persisted, they could have impounded the soup ingredient.” - Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

Themes and Responses

b. Making migration policies youth- and gender-sensitive

Migration policies today are often driven by political demands in host countries. Immigration laws have become extremely restrictive in many developed countries in the past decade, particularly following September 11th, 2001. Respondents commented on the difficulties these restrictions created. Migrants may now find it difficult to travel often between countries, and to send money or packages back home through both official and informal channels. It may also be harder for them to bring their families along with them, meaning that husbands or wives and children are cut off from one parent. Even when they receive remittances from parents, children of migrants may suffer emotional isolation or neglect.

“We can in a way try to remove the barriers that prevent migrants from sending some profits back home. We can also try to ensure that these benefits are evenly distributed amongst the people of the community.” - Jude Thaddeus, 21, Cameroon

However, respondents also noted that lack of immigration enforcement is also a problem, citing corruption and national rights. Although it is difficult to track the specific effects of migration on men, women and children because so little migration data is divided by age or gender, evidence suggests that children are also more susceptible to international trafficking than other groups. Lack of border enforcement is one factor that allows trafficking, although other factors (such as lack of rights for irregular immigrants) also play a role.

“By implementing special offices/police men that get paid in order to assure this situation. It is hard when corruption exists in a place.” - Andrea Arzaba, 20, Mexico

“I am not sure about migration policies because there needs to be some strict measures which restrict entry into a "migrant destination" because they might be benevolent to open their doors for migrants but not always do they have the capacity to look after the needs of the migrants. Though traveling from one nation to another should be slightly less tedious because we would like to move towards a borderless world or rather soft border world.” - Roli Mahjan, 23, India

c. Migration and the MDGs

Respondents recognized that almost every MDG was affected by migration in some way, although “some effects are direct while others are affected indirectly” (Roli Mahajan). Respondents particularly noted the issues of environmental sustainability, maternal and child health, gender equity, and creating a global partnership for development.

One respondent noted that health might be affected by migration and international exchange in unexpected ways:

“In Nigeria, it has been observed that a foreign plant was brought into Nigeria (despite tough Nigeria immigration laws). This plant's spores have spread over Nigeria, replicating so fast and constituting most forests we have. Sadly too, the plant has triggered allergies (sinusitis) in people. The health of many Nigerians is now at risk because of the negative effect of migration on health.” - Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

Themes and Responses

d. Room for youth contributions

Youth respondents unequivocally believed that there was a place for their involvement in migration policymaking and linking migration to the MDGs. Nearly all of the respondents mentioned making use of traditional media sources to create awareness about both the benefits of migration (in developed countries) and the dangers of migration (in less-developed countries). The implication is that youth think the media are currently doing an unsatisfactory job educating people on these topics. Suggestions also included cooperating with other parties, particularly government and NGOs.

“Young people can and must get migration work for the achievement of the MDGs by getting the word out NOW on the advantages of MDGs and migration too.”
- Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

“[Youth could contribute by] creating awareness among the masses regarding the difficulties faced by the migrants and how they hinder the achievement of MDGs through traditional media.” - Roli Mahajan, 23, India

“Try to convince those states that do not want people into their country to realize what help they might be offering these people if they allow them to enter their country.”
- Jude Thaddeus, 21, Cameroon

4. Recommendations

It is clear from these perspectives that youth believe migrants have valuable economic and cultural contributions on their home and host societies. The challenge these respondents laid out was to help their fellow citizens realize these benefits through media presentations and advocacy campaigns.

Themes and Responses

Theme Two: Migrant integration, reintegration and circulation for development



1. Overview of the Issue

There has been a massive shift in global international migration. Over the past two decades global migration has markedly changed due to the development of communication and reduced cost of transportation. All the necessary factors prepared special conditions for circular migration to arise. Now even the most vulnerable groups of migrants can engage in a circular migration process and seek economical, cultural and social benefits. The ease of migration has made members of some host countries anxious about immigrants, leading to laws limiting movement and integration. Bans and restrictions (whether political, economical or cultural) from policy makers do not solve the problem of migration, however; on the contrary, overly harsh restrictions promote undocumented migration and make various migrant groups, especially women, even more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. At the same time, there is a lack of communication between society, government and migrants. Even basic communication about where to turn in case of an emergency is lacking, because migrants might are often not aware of their rights.

2. Questions

1. Have you ever migrated and returned?
2. What are the necessary policies for promoting circular migration? (What policies are needed to protect vulnerable migrant groups from both racial/ethnic and gender discrimination in the labour market?)
3. If you were or are a migrant, how would a form of short-term migration affect your integration into your host country?
4. What does “integration” mean to you?

3. Views

7 answers were received from our consultation participants. Although not all of them have had the experience of being a migrant (whether temporary or long-term), they were still very active in this week’s consultation and provided some valuable suggestions.

Themes and Responses

a. Personal experience of being a temporary migrant.

Three out of seven respondents have never migrated, but at least knew people who had. One respondent had migrated within the country. Another three had migrated for a certain period of time, but all of them had returned to their home country.

“I have migrated to the U.S (States of Arizona, Illinois & Indiana) and returned to my country Nigeria.” - Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

“I have migrated and returned many times. My travel map on my profile lists out 162 cities in 15 countries. Except one, all has been for visits and not for work.”
- Dr. E. Mohamed Rafique, 49, India

“I migrated from Liberia to Ivory Coast in 1991 during the Liberian civil war and returned to Liberia in 1998.” - Alfred C. Kargbo, 29, Liberia

b. Views of necessary policies for promoting circular migration.

All the respondents agree that current migration policies have many gaps that allow such bad outcomes as racism, discrimination and violation of principle human rights.

“Policies would need to have several specifications dealing with racism and human rights protection.” - Andrea Arzaba, 20, Mexico

The most rational solution corresponding with the MDG 8 is stated below:

“(a) All firms in the host country must be equal employers of labour; (b) all migrants (in their host country) must pay their tax and also invest in the economy of the country by buying their goods and services.” - Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

“(a) Availability of jobs for skilled migrants regardless of gender (Work policies); (b) protection of migrants by giving them a protective status; (c) health policies, etc.”
- Alfred C. Kargbo, 29, Liberia

“(a) Both “type” of countries should pay attention to the difficulty of returning low-skilled migrants; (b) a goal might be enforcing employment laws in order to avoid illegal issues; (c) proposition of longer contracts should be offered to make easier the generation of economic outcomes/savings for migrants and to decrease visa issues; (d) take into account the flexibility for applying for permanent residence; (e) it should be attention on social security benefits –transferring them to the origin country.”
- Maria Fernanda, 23, Mexico

However, not all the respondents were so positive about migration policies.

“I am not happy to mention this but I think that we will never find a policy that assures protection of vulnerable groups when discrimination and corruption still exist in our nations.” - Andrea Arzaba, 20, Mexico

Themes and Responses

The reason for cleavages between migrants and local communities are suggested below.

“The difference in the kind of privileges provided to the migrants and the actual citizens have created ill-feelings among the residents of the town.”
- Roli Mahajan, 23, India

c. Effect of short-term migration on integration into the host country.

Respondents shared different opinions due to their actual and imagined migration experiences.

Positive experiences and ideas included:

“Culturally, a short-term stay is enough for the migrants to learn from different cultures and later on integrate it into their communities.”
- Jude Thaddeus, 21, Cameroon

“Experience as a tourist makes me believe I would learn how to speak slang language, which may get you comfortable to establish good relationships with natives from host countries”. - Maria Fernanda, 23, Mexico

Negative experiences and ideas included:

“As a migrant in the 1980s to the US, I was affected by short-term migrations as follows: (a) Inability to learn their culture, language and lifestyle of the American people. (b) Inability to fully socialize with them (due to point above) and hence me and my family almost became aliens.” - Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

“We as migrants just stand out in the host country, especially, if the racial differences are explicit.”
- Dr. E. Mohamed Rafique, 49, India

“As a migrant, a form of short-term migration would affect my integration in my host country by: (a) not allowing me to learn my host culture or language; (b) not allowing me to offer my skills as a migrant worker; (c) not allowing me to adopt an integrative approach in me would be community, school, or some other social institution, etc”
- Alfred C. Kargbo, 29, Liberia

One respondent showed very important but also very clear view about the difficulties that migrants might or are feeling, even if they choose short-term/circular migration.

“I would never feel at home.” - Andrea Arzaba, 20, Mexico

d. Meaning of integration.

All respondents agrees that integration should include the natural sense of belonging which means sharing common values, engagement in decision making (in host community), the acceptance of the equality of all human beings and the respect of linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Themes and Responses

“Integration is a way of saying that two things should be considered on the scale of how they can be made to co-exist.” - Jude Thaddeus, 21, Cameroon

“Integration to me means total acceptance that all human beings are equal, whether they are migrants or citizens of the host country.” - Dr. E. Mohamed Rafique, 49, India

“Integration means to be able to live with other regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, past conflict, etc.” - Alfred C. Kargbo, 29, Liberia

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4. Recommendations

The most important suggestion of the respondents regarding the MDG's and GFMD is the importance of the cooperation between the countries. It is very important to stress that migration is multi-sided process involving migrants, local community and policy makers. We must never forget, however, that we are always dealing with human beings.

Theme Three: Migrant Communication, Policy and Institutional Coherence



1. Overview of the Issue

Communication has emerged as one of the central topics in migration studies and policy-making. Migrants (like any people) are part of social networks that sustain them socially and sometimes economically as well. Recent technologies such as online social networking sites (facebook, MySpace, Hi5, etc.), email and internet, Skype, and mobile phones (so-called “new media”) make it cheaper and easier for many to keep in touch with friends and family abroad, and to share their experiences with others or publicize their own perspectives widely.

These technologies allow migrants to communicate in ways that were much more difficult even five years ago, potentially increasing migrants' access to information about their legal rights, opportunities and events in their home country, and news from their friends and family. As migration laws have grown more restrictive, migrants have been able to connect with spouses, children, or parents who were “left behind.” Migrants may also connect with each other to organize social events in their host country, mobilize development projects in their home country, or protest unfair treatment.

Not everyone has equal access to these technologies or finds them useful in making migrants more involved and included in migration policies, however. It is important to listen to youth themselves to understand how and what types of communication aid in migration and development.

Similarly, communication technologies don't automatically ensure that non-governmental organizations and government institutions listen to migrants or to each other. This can lead to policies which make it difficult to engage with their home countries or host countries, and which may not take migrants' best interests and desires into account.

Themes and Responses

Theme Three: Migrant Communication, Policy and Institutional Coherence

2. Questions

1. As a migrant or non-migrant, how do you communicate with distant friends and relatives?
What are your discussions and conversations about?
2. As a migrant, do you feel concerned by development debates or issues about your country of origin?
3. How could the government make you feel that your experiences and perspectives were considered in migration policies?

3. Views

Six respondents shared their views on migration and communication. Ranging from Baghdad, Iraq to Liberia, they stressed similar themes in their answers.

Constant contact through new media

All the participants – both migrants and non-migrants – said that they kept in constant contact with friends and relatives. Internet was generally given as the most popular way of keeping in touch, which is perhaps to be expected given that this consultation was conducted via the internet. Respondents also mentioned phones, text messages, facebook, and letters as other methods of communication. They used these tools to discuss personal or family matters, finances, conditions and opportunities in their home countries, and also possibilities for migration to relatives' host countries.

“I communicate with distant friends and relatives through phone, email and face book. Most discussion/conversation is sharing thoughts about the culture of the people, their behaviour and how easy/tough it is to work in that country as a migrant.”
– Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

“We often discuss about opportunities abroad and what we like at home. Also discuss about our country problems, the effects and what I can do personally to get out of our country which am not ready to do. In our conversation, they often inform me that though it is not like things are perfect abroad but it is still better than our country they advised that I should by all means go out of the country so as to use my skills where they will appreciate me.” - Casey Gbenga Adeleye, 30, Nigeria

One respondent, however, reminded people that it was not always so easy for people to keep in touch with their family members – nor do migrants in every situation enjoy the ease of consistent communication. Refugees and trafficking victims, for example, may not have access to telephones or family members to pass messages.

“As a migrant during my refugee life in Côte d’Ivoire, my only means of communication with distant friends and relatives were through postal mails, occasionally by telephone and by message giving to travelers between Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia. My discussions and conversations were about my family condition in exile as a refugee as well as inquiring how conditions were like back home in Liberia. - Alfred Kargbo, 29, Liberia

Themes and Responses

Staying involved with their host country

Many migrants retain connections between two or more locations, wanting to become part of their new host communities while remaining attached and engaged in personal or political events in their home country. This week's respondents agreed that they wanted to stay informed about events in their host country, but differed in the degree to which they wanted to remain engaged. Not all migrants wish to return to their countries of origin, but many may follow the news in their home country, whether reported by friends and family or, increasingly, by news outlets. Some migrants feel personally connected to their country's image abroad. Other migrants want to take an active part in helping their home communities cope with problems, and believe that other migrants should as well.

“Of course I will concern but not very much as if I'm in my country, I will be updated through the TV and Internet.” - Ghadier Al-Saoudi, Iraq

“As a migrant, I feel so concerned by development issues about my country of origin. Then, in the 1986 time of Nigeria's fame as the oil boom nation, I entered into a nasty argument with some Americans in my school (in Purdue, Indiana, U.S.A). Their view was that Nigeria (then) was a corrupt nation but I was telling them that as a citizen (who just left my country) that things were not as bad as the media put it.” - Daniel Onyi, 31, Nigeria

“Migrants should never forget about their home country and they should try as much as possible to indulge in developmental debates in their country of origin as they are strategic partners in development. The government of most Africa countries (especially) rely on their migrant to help them in development... they travel and acquire skills that are essential for development.” - Jude Thaddeus, 21, Cameroon

One respondent reminded group members that development is a process stemming from partnerships between people abroad and people remaining in the host country, not just a stream of help from abroad.

“Yes, I feel concerned about development debates about my country of origin. But I use to say that development will come through practical actions and not only in talking. I realized that debates will highlight the step to take but both... migrant and non-migrant have responsibility to develop the country of origin”
- Casey Gbenga Adeleye, 30, Nigeria

Including youth perspectives in policy

Respondents all agreed that youth's experiences should be taken into account in migration policy, although few people had specific suggestions. One participant believed that making travel easier would help young migrants feel that their concerns were addressed, while another believed that current migration policies weren't adequately applied. Several people expressed the belief that the government would consider youth needs by developing opportunities within a home country, not just by focusing on direct migration policies.

Themes and Responses

“I will first of all like to say that policies that aims at migration, should involve youths in the decision making as they are the most people who migrate. If there governments cannot ask and make use of their opinions, then these youths will migrate and the working population will decrease. For the government to make the young population feel that they are part of the decision making, they should create an enabling environment for people who want to travel (e.g easy assess to passports, insurance, study leave amongst others).”
- Jude Thaddeus, 21, Cameroon

“I can feel my experiences and perspectives were considered in migration policies by the government if all they policies put in place are being applied not just in paper but in practice.”- Arrey Emmanuel, 30, Cameroon

“The government can only make me feel better in their migration policies by carrying out the policies’ to the letter. They should feel concern too about development of the country to attract those in the Diasporas back home.”
- Casey 'Gbenga Adeleye, 30, Nigeria

4. Recommendations

As participants' answers show, migrants use communication tools regularly to keep in touch with family and to learn about developments in their home country. These tools are therefore a valuable – and largely under-used – way for home and host country governments to engage their migrant or diaspora populations. Although youth weren't specific about steps the government could take to include them in policy discussions, governments could canvas migrants' views through electronic focus groups, hotlines, etc. They could also facilitate the ability of migrants to share news and even money with their families by promoting the spread of less expensive or publicly accessible communication methods within the country.



Governments should focus on the fact that many migrants remain interested in their home countries, yet are connected primarily through the news or through personal contacts. Many development projects are linked to personal relationships between diasporas and communities. Governments could therefore explore whether there is a space for more “official” links between migrants and their home countries, such as with national investment promotion centers. Governments can also help ensure that migrants are receiving correct information about migration opportunities, by publicizing official guides to investment, travel, visas, etc. that consider youth peoples' needs.

Conclusions, Policy Implications and Recommendations

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As the number of people who joined the Youth Consultation on Migration and Development this year illustrate, youth have an interest in contributing to migration policy. They certainly have a stake in it; despite being the largest subgroup of migrants, due to the relative ease with which they can move, youth are often under-represented in international migration debates. These often results in policies that make it difficult for migrants to reunite with their families, for example, or that eliminate the possibility of short-term work visas – both policies that youth in this consultation would like to change.

Communication technologies such as cell phones, internet, and TV make it easier for young migrants to both keep in touch with their families and to keep in touch with each other. Youth are overwhelmingly using these methods of communication, some for personal conversations and others to keep informed about developments within their home country.



These technologies have yet to be harnessed in a productive way to channel youths' views to policymakers, however, Youth's voices in the 2009 Online Youth Consultation on Migration have suggested several themes:

1. The importance of creating awareness about the benefits of migration amongst members both home and host countries through the media;
2. Making young migrants feel that they are still part of their home countries, and creating programs and policies that enable migrants to stay connected;
3. Facilitating the use of ICTs for migrant communication, and creating incentives for migrants to come back;
4. Working more closely with host countries to form a true partnership on leveraging migration for development through bilateral agreements that promote temporary migration and gives special attention to the integration needs of vulnerable groups like children and adolescents..

These recommendations echo those made by some older migrants, but they draw a roadmap for the policies a new generation of migrants – today's young people, who are more likely than ever before to be able to move for work, education, or family reasons– will need to truly realize the “development” side of migration and development.



YPWC Final Report

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