

Making Migration and Return Safer in the Context of Sending Communities – A Ghana Example

by

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**Presented at the Child & Youth Migration in West
Africa Conference**

Date: 10th June 2009

Venue: Alisa Hotel, Accra

Introduction

- History of migration in Ghana has been largely a north-south flow based on the spatial distribution of natural resources & the pattern of development pursued in the country;
- The migration of children can be conceived within the development framework i.e., the development dichotomy between the north & south;
- Studies in Ghana have documented the conditions in which child migrants in the cities live and work (Anarfi & Kwankye 2005; Kwankye et al 2007 & 2009; Awumbila, 1985, 2007, etc);
- In spite of the positive aspects of child migration, there are negatives which call for ways to make migration & return safer than they are today.

The Concept of Safe Migration

- Making future or potential migrants aware of factors that expose them to risks, exploitation or abuse both in transit & at destination areas;
- Providing accurate information to educate/sensitize potential migrants about destination areas;
- Things migrants need to know about include labour laws, contract laws, their rights as migrants, training skills they need to be competitive in the job market, etc;
- For return migrants, they need information about the political economy of the origin and areas of possible investment upon return.

Data Sources from the Migration DRC - Ghana

- Independent Child Migration Survey in Accra & Kumasi (2005);
- Return & Reintegration Survey of Child Migrants (2007);
- Presentation is based on the 2007 survey in which 300 return migrants were interviewed in two sending districts in Northern Region;
- Both quantitative & qualitative methods used.

Relevant Questions

- Who returns?
- Why do they return?
- Is the education of those who return different from those who are now migrating?
- To what extent can we say their return & reintegration have been “safe”?
- How do we ensure that migration & return are safer than they are today in terms of the benefits & contributions they make to development? etc.

What have we found?

- Half of the return migrants were in the ages 20-24 & were largely females (60%);
- 48% of females were married compared to 36% males;
- They still have little or no education although males are better compared to females;
- Upon return, they are still housed in the households of their biological parents (64% overall, 74% male, 58% female);
- 80% first migrated at ages 15-17 years;
- Cited reasons of poverty, hardships & to find money to continue their education;
- Just about 20% returned with GH¢100-200.

What have we found? Cont'd

- Upon return, they work on the farm & as traders;
- The work they are doing on return is not different from before they migrated;
- Their earnings are quite low: less than 2% earn GH¢100 or higher per month;
- Ability to make savings prior to return puts the migrant in a better position to return “safely” and can report to have benefited from migration;

Conclusions

- Ability to make adequate savings as a migrant is linked to the kind of job one finds to do at the destination area;
- The kind of work one gets to do in the cities is also linked to one's level of education, training and skills which most of them do not have;
- They are boxed out of competitive & better paid jobs and confined to kayayei & other lowly-paid jobs in the informal sector;
- Savings are low & therefore no sustainable economic reintegration appears possible.

How do we make migration & return safer?

- Sensitize parents & potential migrants in sending communities to value high level education as a basic requirement prior to migration (DAs to act);
- DAs should create a fund to support needy but brilliant school children to facilitate their education and skill training;
- Sensitize sending communities about life in the cities by providing adequate & accurate information to enable parents/children take informed decisions regarding migration;
- Sensitize sending communities to reduce births as a way of reducing poverty;
- Identify and support voluntary return migrants with some financial packages to settle & reintegrate to encourage more voluntary return by the most vulnerable.