



Bangladesh: Emigration as a strategy

- Bangladesh has been a source country of migrant workers since the 1970s.
An estimated 11.4 million Bangladeshi migrants are in more than 90 countries with Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, UAE and Oman as the top destinations.
- In the past five years, the number of migrant workers going abroad increased from 410,000 in 2013 to one million in 2017; in 2018, however, similar to other major labour sending countries in Asia, the number has decreased to about 700,000.
- Majority of them are classified as low-skilled, and twelve percent of them are women.
- In 2019-20, Bangladesh received over USD 18 billion in remittances, which comprised around eight percent of its GDP.

Migrant Resource Centres in Dhaka and Kumilla



Due to the increasing number of Bangladeshi migrant workers and growing complexities of working in other countries, migrants face various issues. One of the most significant is the lack of, or insufficient access to, information and support networks.

ICMPD, together with the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE), established Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Dhaka and Kumilla in February 2020. They are closely integrated with Bangladesh's Bureau of Manpower, Education, Training and the District Manpower and Employment Office.

The MRCs provide a wide range of services including:

- conducting pre-departure orientation seminars for outgoing migrant workers on all migration-related topics.

- providing access to protection mechanisms and information on onsite programmes and return processes.

- informing the public about work and living conditions abroad, recruitment processes, rights and obligations, migration laws and policies, legal and cultural practices in destination countries, and risks and dangers associated with irregular migration.

In terms of concrete results, the MRCs have averaged 40 virtual counselling sessions per month, produced materials for would-be migrants, attracted over 30,000 Facebook followers, reached over 2.5 million people via social media and had physical outreach to over 450,000 people. In addition, health and food supplies have been given to governments, over 1,000 migrant workers in Saudi Arabia and 6,000 returning migrants.

Law Enforcement Cooperation in the region



Via the Silk Routes project, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is also facilitating regional cooperation for law enforcement agencies on irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking; in brief, RELEC. Its aim

is to establish a better transnational response against criminal networks involved in migration-related crimes. At national level in Bangladesh, RELEC aims to support the establishment of a framework for statistical information exchange and analysis of migration trends in order to strengthen national capacities for international cooperation.



Protecting Migrants



With a view to prevent irregular migration, enhance labour migration, and promote best working terms and conditions for Bangladeshis in other countries, MIGRA.P – which stands for “Migrant Protection” - assists the MEWOE in strengthening the capacities of government agencies in crisis management and contingency planning, front line service delivery, and streamlining the response and referral mechanisms among government agencies for migrants in distress or with ongoing cases.

MIGRA.P supports the provision of comprehensive skills training and pre-departure orientation for female migrants in specific work categories which may include domestic work, hospital-ity service, or health-related work such as care-giving.

MIGRA.P also builds the capacity of the government in crisis management and contingency planning as well as with front line service delivery, especially for select Technical Training Centres. Migra.P has also developed guidelines and manuals for would-be migrants.

vulnerabilities related to migration and enhance policy makers in understanding the challenges of the migration process from a women’s perspective. It is implemented by CARE Austria together with CARE International and the Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants Development Foundation.

3. **Reintegration of Returnee Female Migrant Workers in Bangladesh:** This project’s objective is to improve reintegration of female migrant workers and support already settled returning workers in Bangladesh by providing services. It is implemented by the Danish Trade Union Development Agency and the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies.

The “Silk Routes project”



All described activities are conducted under the project “Improving Migration Management in the Silk Routes” which aims at improving migration governance

in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan, as well as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is funded by the European Union and implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The project strengthens the regional dialogue on migration under the Budapest Process which was initiated in 1993. The project hosts the Silk Routes Facility, MIGRA.P and RELEC. In collaboration with its partner countries, it also operates Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs).

Funding support for migration management



The Silk Routes Facility provides support for capacity-building activities. It is currently funding the implementation of three projects in Bangladesh with approximately 250,000 Euros allocated for each:

1. **Addressing climate-induced migration in South Asia:** This project covers Bangladesh (as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan) and contributes to the strengthening of national and regional policies and institutions on climate-induced migration/displacement. It is implemented by ActionAid Bangladesh and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute in Pakistan as well as the Climate Action Network South Asia.
2. **Safe Migration for the Women of Bangladesh:** This project promotes safe and planned migration for Bangladeshi women, as well as gender specific migration policies. The project aims to reduce women’s risks and

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