



**A Report on the
International Workshop on the
Migration of the Highly-Skilled**

**3 and 4 July 2005
ISSER, University of Ghana, Lagos**

Introduction

The workshop was hosted by the Ghanaian partners of the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC) made up of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and the United Nations Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), both at the University of Ghana. The workshop registered a total of 45 participants with international participation from partner centres namely, the University of Sussex, UK, the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh and the Forced Migration Research Studies unit at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, as well as local participation from development practitioners, academicians and policy makers in Ghana (See Appendix 1). Prominent among the participants were the Director General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) and Ghana Immigration Service, directors from the Ministry of the Interior and Human Resource Division (GHS). The Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, the Director of the Centre at Sussex and the Director and Deputy Directors of ISSER also attended the meeting.

Opening Ceremony

The opening session was chaired by Prof. Nelson Otu Addo, a former staff member of ISSER and the official opening was performed by Prof. C. N. B. Tagoe, the Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana. The Director of ISSER welcomed the participants and the Director of the Migration DRC made a presentation on the background of the collaboration. The Acting Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the positive and negative sides of migration to developing countries and advocated a good management system to monitor migration flows in order to derive the maximum benefit while minimizing the risks involved in the process of migration.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Agyeman Badu Akosa, Director General, GHS. He gave a profile of the health situation in Ghana and highlighted the cost of the emigration of health professionals to the health sector. Of priority were the issues of inadequate production of health staff and their poor retention which he intimated had worsened in the past decade. He also enumerated the push and pull factors and effects of the brain drain. According to him, the brain drain was as a result of the availability of job opportunities, remuneration and facilities for training and practice of the profession, as also educational opportunities, general treatment of health workers and demographic and socio-economic characteristics at both sending and receiving destinations. In his presentation, he outlined:

- Global and local initiatives for human resource development for the health sector;
- Sub-Saharan African physicians in USA which indicated that 10 medical schools in 4 countries, namely South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana and Ethiopia produced 79.4 percent of the emigrant physicians in the USA, out of a total of 87 medical schools in the region;
- Low physician and nurse/patient ratio of developed countries as against some other African countries including Ghana;
- Cost of medical education to Ghana (estimated to be 9 million USD per year);
- Cost of professionals leaving Africa;
- Adverse impact of poor human resources on health indicators in Ghana i.e. increase in under-5 mortality, stagnating maternal mortality rate as well as low improvement in Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI), and general weakening of health care systems;
- Efforts being made and those which need to be made to improve human resources, institutions and training facilities for the health sector.

He emphasized the need for concerted efforts and political commitment to addressing the problems facing the health care system. He deplored the piecemeal efforts applied to health sector problems and blamed it on the inaction on the part of the state.

In his conclusion, he reiterated the fact that the ultimate losers would be users of the health services in the remotest regions and highlighted the probability of increasing inequality with the poor getting poorer. He stated that Ghana's health care delivery system was at the crossroads and that the most important issue for attention was human resource development. Until the status quo is changed, Ghana will not be able to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or see the improvement needed to move the country forward.

His address provoked a lot of discussion on the issue of bonding medical students and the period of bonding; the need to put in place mechanisms to ensure a sustained supply of health workers and the possibility of instituting loan schemes which have worked in other countries. Some participants were of the view that appropriate mechanisms were needed to sustain the production of health workers to meet the health care needs at home and abroad. Others were of the view that the option of bonding of medical students for 3 years after graduation could be considered. However, this would need a credible loan scheme.

The Chairman thanked the organizers of the workshop for the opportunity to carry forward the discourse on international migration. This, he said, was pertinent against the background that poor countries have to use their scarce resources to train their health personnel who migrate to richer countries, thereby perpetuating the poverty of these poor countries. He appealed to all concerned not to stop the debate and never cease talking to the appropriate quarters because *someone* would listen if only they did not give up.

Session 1: Global Context of Skilled Migration – Country Examples

Chair: Naa Prof. John S. Nabila.

Globalisation, Skilled Migration and Poverty

Ron Skeldon

Prof Skeldon provided the broad context of remittances and the migration of the highly skilled with most of his examples from Asia. He traced the trend of the migratory flow from the 1950s when scientists moved from the UK to the USA until the present when it is health workers moving from the developing countries to the UK and other developed countries. Students, he said, were also another group involved in the movement. Drawing from the literature on migration, he highlighted the following:

- The lack of emphasis on internal brain drain (rural – urban areas, less paid to better paid jobs etc.);
- The conception of the movement of the highly skilled as a system in its own right and not linked to the movement of the less skilled; and
- Fuzzy definitions and spongy data on the highly skilled.

He then focused on three issues, namely, globalisation of education, health for all with emphasis on a two-tier system, and outsourcing of the highly skilled. Under the globalisation of education, he drew attention to the tendency of many to relate place of birth with place of skills training; the existence of a hierarchical pattern in the movement of the highly skilled (the rural-

educated will move to urban areas, the urban-trained will move outside the country, etc., to make use of their skills); the fully trained cannot use their skills locally and therefore move out, and he supported these with examples from China, Ghana, India, Malaysia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

On health for all, he emphasized the two-tier system whereby one group is trained to meet international standards and the other to handle local needs in the rural areas. This was particularly important since the highly skilled, more often than not, do not accept postings to rural areas. On outsourcing of the highly skilled, he cited examples from East Asia where he alluded to the fact that the proportion of those who return increased because there was something to return to. He mentioned that Taiwan, which used to be a country of emigration had become a country of immigration. A lot of the outsourcing has been in the area of IT but could also be applied to the health and education sectors (e.g. medical tourism in countries like Thailand).

In his conclusion, he intimated that

- there would be major changes in the next 15 years with most of them based on the metropolitan state than the government
- it would be interesting to look at the net impact of remittances from the highly skilled as well as the unskilled on poverty

On whether, while meeting local health needs, the global market niche could also be accessed by poor countries, he said a good government policy could create the skills needed locally and internationally and that the production of paramedics and importation of health professionals could be alternative solutions. The Director of Human Resource Division of GHS said that the Division advocated a two-tier system where middle level manpower would be trained against the background of the refusal of many professionals to serve in rural communities. He said they were initiating the training of senior secondary school leavers to be medical assistants, who would also be able to give basic surgical care after 2-3 years. He added that currently the medical corps was taken from the nursing stock and failures of medical students was more likely at the pre-clinical stages and not at the clinical stage where three attempts are allowed to all students to ensure that most of them make it. A proposal to allow for five attempts was being considered.

Quantifying the Bilateral Movement of International Migrants

Christopher Parsons

Chris gave the global figure for international migrants as 176.6 million and explained how realistic this was, quoting sources like the UN and the OECD. He provided an overview as to how he, together with Alan Winters and Terrie Walmsley, had come up with the matrix of stocks for sending and receiving countries, the modelling techniques used, and the various data sources from the various countries that had been accessed, while also highlighting the limitations of this effort.

Discussion after the presentation focused on the definition of a migrant against a scenario where a student might have gone to Sussex but might have returned home, the existence of illegal migrants and the weak international migration data available. A country like Nigeria was missing from the top ten countries of emigration, while the Democratic Republic of Congo was featured, and questions were raised as to the possibility of uncertainty as a result and whether Ukraine's third position for both in and out migration validated the other sources of information.

His response was that the time span of the study considered duration and they used all the data sources like census and information from home offices in various countries to also capture those on waiting list. To the Nigerian issue, he responded that future update and refining over time could possibly include Nigeria, and that the Ukrainian case presented by the UN validated the other sources. He however, mentioned that against the background of a weak migration database, this study was to establish a base of lifetime migration to start from.

Session 2: *The Health Sector: Channels of Access and Channels of Exit*
Chair: Prof. Clement Ahiadeke, ISSER

The Training of Nurses and Exit from Bangladesh
Prof. Salahuddin Aminuzzaman

Prof Aminuzzaman pointed out that both the demand and supply sides of health workers on the global market were growing and gave some statistics as it pertained to the case of Bangladesh. He intimated that currently Bangladesh exported about 2000 nurses to the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia. He described Bangladeshi nurses as less qualified internationally compared to Filipino nurses. He attributed this to the fact that nursing in Bangladesh was seen as a low social class profession and that most of the 44 nursing training colleges were government owned and awarded diplomas. Interventions in place included partnership with other nursing schools in North America and some Asian countries.

Issues that came up during discussion included

- the still largely subsidized rates in both the education and health sectors for the average Bangladeshi citizen;
- the efforts on the part of Bangladesh, which exports skilled and unskilled labour, to emphasise mechanisms that could improve the labour that was exported.

He concluded by urging all to do away with emotionalism and look at the mechanisms that could help maximize the opportunities of migration of both skilled and unskilled labour.

Health Workers and Intention to Migrate from Ghana
Prof. J.K. Anarfi

Prof Anarfi presented the preliminary findings of a study involving medical and nursing students and their intention to migrate. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the future outlook for Ghanaian professionals, particularly health workers; the consequences of emigration for the health sector and training of health personnel as well as the policy options available to help minimize the risks and maximize the benefits of emigration. The study, which involved 500 trainees (both medical students and nurses), has the following major findings:

- The sample was largely made up of females (78.1%);
- Most of the students interviewed were born in urban areas and had parents especially fathers with relatively higher education;
- In terms of aspirations, none of the students indicated that he/she decided to pursue a medical profession because it is the gateway to emigrate;
- Almost 70% of them indicated that if they ever decided to emigrate, it would be for the purpose of pursuing further training;
- USA and UK were the most attractive destinations mentioned;
- More nurses preferred the UK while the medical students preferred the USA;

- About 60% of the students expressed their intention to emigrate soon after graduation with a higher proportion among the medical than the nursing students;
- Reasons which could make them stay included economic improvement, educational opportunities for post graduate studies and reduction in frustrations.

During discussion, the issue of medical students having relatives, especially fathers, in the medical profession suggested that family background plays a role in the choice of profession. It was suggested that the final findings of the survey should be widely disseminated with relevant stakeholders for appropriate interventions because of the inherent policy implications for the development of Ghana, particularly the health sector.

An interesting point which was discussed at length was the cost involved in the training of the health worker and who bore that cost. This brought to the table a lot of discussion on private against government-sponsored training and the issue of the export of health workers. In Bangladesh, there was an explicit policy to export health workers whereas in Ghana, there was no such policy even though there were agencies actively recruiting them.

It was suggested that the two studies should be compared. In response to a question on the export of health workers when they are not in sufficient supply, Prof. Aminuzzaman responded that it was a coordinated strategy of the Ministry of Health as part of its migration plan to send a certain proportion of specific types of medical doctors and nurses abroad. In Bangladesh, private nurses training institutions and ICT exist to help produce and meet the targeted number of health workers to be exported but these are quite expensive. Medical tourism in India was cited as an example that could be replicated with the export of professionals and creating a market to attract Indians in the diaspora for treatment in India. There are private nursing institutions in Ghana but they have had difficulty in obtaining accreditation which has resulted in the closure of some of them.

The following issues were raised were:

- private sector trained health workers were not a drain on the economy because private sector money could go anywhere;
- professionals are emigrating anyway, and so this should be factored in to reap the maximum benefit and
- institutional weaknesses should be addressed to monitor and ensure that there are mechanisms to achieve the intended benefits.

Session 3: The Health Sector: The Impact of the Exodus of the Skilled on Ghana'

Chair: Dr. S. O. Kwankye, RIPS

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First Presentation: Migration Effects on the Health Sector in Ghana by Dr. Delanyo Dovlo and Dr. Frank Nyonator

His presentation focused on the situational analysis of the health sector in Ghana with emphasis on the staff attrition, lack of infrastructure, inequitable distribution of staff and geographical disparities; impact of HIV/AIDS and the unlikelihood of Ghana achieving the health-related MDGs. Recommendations included an increase in intake of core cadres for training and expansion of training facilities; improving salaries and providing incentives to retain the remaining health workers; implementing new policies and strategies for human resource management systems.

Questions that were posed included the average working life of a nurse; what explained the spikes observed and whether it was a Ghanaian phenomenon. It was explained that in 1999-2000, the Additional Duty Hour Allowance (ADHA) had started and in 2001, there was a lot of recruitment with work permit in the destination countries.

Second Presentation: Do Migrants' Remittances Improve Socio-Economic Livelihoods in Ghana? By Dr. Peter Quartey

His study was based on four rounds of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) which sought to investigate the impact of migrant remittances on household welfare or livelihood in Ghana. Some of the major findings were:

- that the proportion of migrant remittance that comes from outside Africa has increased while that from other African countries has decreased;
- that the flow of migrant remittances increases household welfare;
- that economic shocks reduce household welfare but this is minimized by migrant remittances, particularly for food crop farmers and
- that there is the absence of consumption synergies within larger households;

Discussion

- the informal sector for transferring money was declining and the formal going up and therefore there is the need to integrate the informal and formal sectors;
- policies need to be put in place to ensure reduced cost of transferring funds to relatives in Ghana since remittances improve livelihood;
- the need for a policy to ensure that migrants not only remit their relations but also can hold foreign currency denominated accounts with competitive interest rates;
- the controversial debate of developing countries subsidizing the economies of developed countries with the investment in the former's skilled labour which is employed in the latter;
- the fact that economic analysis of the migration of the highly skilled was good without considering the opportunity cost (plenty remittances but dead society and loss of cost of training of the health workers and
- the need to investigate further the paradox of remittances which proposes that the highly skilled remit less than the unskilled.

DAY TWO

Session 4: the Education Sector: Movement of Academics

Chair: Prof. Ronald Sheldon

Presentation: 'The Exodus of Teachers from Ghanaian Universities' by Professor Takyiwaa Manuh

Her presentation was based on a study of public universities in Ghana. She identified high student-staff ratios in all faculties except medicine. She indicated the student-staff ratios exceeded the norm set by the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE). For instance, the Faculties of Education and Humanities had student-staff ratios of 82 and 47 respectively compared with NCTE established ratios of 15 and 18.

Apart from the faculty members being advanced in age, the bulk of the teaching staff was lecturers (61%) as against NCTE's norm of 50%. The lecturers in the Faculties of Education,

Science and Humanities constituted 75.7%, 61.1% and 60.3% respectively. It was also observed that the universities were understaffed - KNUST had only 69% of its required staff at post in 2002. The shortage was manifested among senior administrators, research fellows and lecturers who formed less than 50% of their required numbers. She indicated that admissions to the University of Ghana grew from 28.1% to 39.9% of the qualified applicants between 1997 and 2002 without any corresponding increase in teaching staff.

This problem was not peculiar to the tertiary level. At the basic education level, 20,215 out of 46,215 vacancies for teachers (43.6%) were filled between 2000 and 2002. Only 50.9% of the basic school teachers at post in 2002 were trained and the situation was worst in the Upper East (20.1%) and Northern (20.4%) regions.

Among other things, 'brain drain' was attributed to institutional factors, inefficient human resource management, political factors, emigration of intellectuals, poor working conditions, etc. The measures to avert brain drain suggested by the respondents included improvement in research/teaching facilities (22%), remuneration (21%), learning facilities (19%), research funding (20%) and working environment (18%).

The impacts of 'brain drain' on education were listed to include heavy academic workload leading to declining quality of teaching and learning, low research output, limited administrative support and little specialization by lecturers. Other adverse impacts were low post-graduate output, low morale, and relative increase in part-time staff which is costly and undermines human resource planning. These have resulted in unpredictability in university human resource planning and little investment in human capital formation.

The policy recommendations included institution of restrictive policies on the highly skilled (bonding and compulsory national service). Ghana should consciously harness the intellectual stock of knowledge and skills of its population in the diaspora. In addition, the utilization of funds allocation through the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) should be extended beyond infrastructural provision to staff training and professional development schemes. For example, part of the GETFund should be allocated to support local postgraduate training programmes, e.g. KNUST initiative on PH.D training. However, the allocation of part of the funds from the GETfund to private tertiary institutions in Ghana would defeat the purposes for which it was set up.

Discussion

The participants reiterated that institutional factors account for many of the problems confronting the educational sector rather than government policies. With respect to the many vacancies in the education sector, it was explained that they were real but advertising and recruiting personnel required prior approval from the Ministry of Finance. In view of the relatively low levels of salaries, it was difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. For instance, the Mathematics Department of the University of Ghana was dying due to failure to attract and retain young teaching staff. On the issue of norms established by NCTE, it was stated that students-staff ratio of 82: 1 in the Faculty of Education was too bad. This situation was attributed to the relatively large number of students in the first and second years.

In the view of some participants, the fact that faculty members mentioned issues other than remuneration was indication that they were interested in what they were doing. The proposed reduction in funding for tertiary education under GPRS2 was based on the view that basic education has relatively higher social returns than tertiary education. However, it was

demonstrated that basic education cannot be improved with reduction in funding for teacher training.

Migration in Africa has been described as circulatory and the location specific capital of migrants enhances the feeling of coming back among African migrants was relatively high. However, Ghana has not focused its attention on this aspect of the phenomenon. FIFA has rules on football players that whenever their national teams needed them, their foreign teams should release them. It was felt that similar arrangements could be made with countries and institutions employing skilled personnel from developing countries.

It was suggested that experts in the many knowledge centres which had been set up outside the universities should be invited to join the faculties. In order to attract and tap their skills to boost the human resource base of the universities, it was proposed that they could be made adjunct professors.

Policy engagement was identified as one difficult area when dealing with the universities in Ghana. University authorities were therefore urged to build consensus among the various constituencies in order to address the problems confronting them. Thus, universities were entreated to assist in the search for solution to their problems. It was also suggested that universities should find innovative ways of paying staff to enhance performance.

On the issue of the absence of young faculty members, it was ascribed to lack of mentoring in the universities. The struggles that young people go through before obtaining their qualification to join faculty account for the aging staff. Even though some departments were commended for helping young members of faculty to progress, senior members were implored to intensify their efforts.

Chairman's Concluding Remarks

He commended the presenter for her brilliant presentation. He stated that preferential treatment of returnees was not a welcome option. There was the need to target them, and be flexible with the intellectuals in the diaspora.

Session 5: The Issue of Return

Chair: Dr. Matilda Pappoe, School of Public Health, University of Ghana.

First Presentation: The Concept of Sustainable Return (Richard Black)

In his presentation, he indicated that return of migrants seen as a route to development by reversing the 'brain drain' or opportunity for capital transfer and investment. Return could also mean the 'preferred durable solution' for refugees or part of 'post-conflict reconstruction' process. Other reasons for return include a response to the 'immigration crisis' or forced and 'voluntary' removal.

The study identified the factors which make return successful included volume of return, concentration over time, duration of migrant's absence, social class and motives for return. In addition, the degree of difference between home/host countries in terms of standards of living, nature of training and skills acquired. The political relationship between home and host countries could also determine the success of return.

It was found that forced/voluntary, with or without assistance influences the sustainability of return. The availability and conditions of employment as well as the legal status of emigrants

determines the success of the migrant's return. The home country context included the recognition of qualifications or skills acquired by the emigrants abroad.

Problems of returnees included inability to return to their original houses, job, neighbourhood, etc. Relatively low salaries level and limited opportunities for advancement were some of the poor working conditions that returned migrants usually faced. Some also faced difficult relationship between returnees and non-migrants as well as excessive demands on the resources of returnees by family members and friends. Frustrations with business climate, corruption and inadequate personal savings threaten successful return. The feeling of nostalgia for the country of destination could pose problem for some returnees.

It was reported that nearly 75% of the elite Ivorians returned immediately after their studies. Nearly 33% of less-skilled Ghanaians returned because they had 'no choice' (Return of rejection). In addition, return as a positive lifestyle choice was identified amongst elite returnees and sometimes for retirees (Return for respect). Sustainable return had physical, economic and political dimensions as well as transfer of financial, human and social capital aspects.

Conclusion

- Return is a multi-dimensional phenomenon but not discrete in time
- Has economic, social, and political components
- Implies changes in financial, social and human capital
- Has impacts beyond the individual returnee
- Outcome more affected by context than by nature of return or returnee
- States can best promote 'sustainable return' by facilitating the *conditions for return?*

Return of Bangladeshi Emigrants: A Workshop Report (C.R Abrar)

He indicated that there were 14 presentations in two days under the theme 'transnationalism'. The workshop considered return in the traditional context. There were country/region specific presentations during the conference and stories from some returnees. It was revealed that 'knowledge' workers of Bangladesh returned home with skills, set up businesses, etc. It was observed that most Bangladeshi emigrants return on their own accord rather than being forced.

The participants blamed the absence of data on lack of organisation or procedure to facilitate data collection. They had chosen to live in low tax areas or return to make significant contribution to the country's political process. Taiwan offers incentives such as subsidises on education for children in order to attract highly skilled emigrants back home. It was observed that local government, joint venture and research grants for academics in China helped to attract highly skilled back home. The migrants also indicated that overseas experience acquired including training and skills helped them to secure better jobs. In Bangladesh, highly skilled office has been set up, property right and dual citizenship granted; as well as international "migrants' day" declared in a bid to boost the morale of emigrants.

Among other things, the reasons for return included family obligation – need to attend to one's aging parents. Some returnees indicated that they did not want their children to adopt lifestyles alien to their culture. Some emigrants, particularly those domiciled in the USA attributed their return to crisis that Moslems faced as a result of September 11, 2001 terrorists attack. They, therefore, returned as a pre-emptive measure. Furthermore, others ascribed their return to the urge to contribute to the growth and development of one's own country.

The factors which facilitated their return included improvement in access to ICT, education and health care facilities in their countries of origin comparable with those of their host countries. In addition, improvement in the private sector to provide investment opportunities and employment served as a pull. For example, there were private universities to offer employment to academics.

The migrants complained about slow decision making on matters affecting them. Lack of infrastructure and adequate equipment to operate effectively and the relatively low remuneration in the country of origin were also mentioned as problems for them. Corruption was identified as another problem that returned migrants faced. Notwithstanding the problems enumerated, none of the returnees had regretted for returning home. They however, felt that they had broadened their intellectual horizon.

Discussion

With respect to Ghanaian emigrants who left home because of political persecution, it was explained that the sample included political migrants but the study did not treat them differently. This was because respondents refused to indicate deportation or forced return. It was stated that models were being developed to incorporate the inflows of political migrants. Forced returnees were not doing well relative to those who return voluntarily.

Bangladesh was commended for accepting migration as positive phenomenon to its development, hence, the establishment of the Ministry for Overseas Employment. In Ghana, dual citizenship, homecoming summit and representation of peoples bill currently being debated by Parliament constituted efforts at attracting home Ghanaians in the diaspora. However, there was the need to pay serious attention to address the concerns of the returned migrants and those in the diaspora who intend to come home.

To whether the returned migrants were the primary or secondary migrants, it was explained that the study did not consider the second generation migrants. It was stated however, that the study of return migration in the Balkans found relatively high proportion of third generation migrants returning.

As to whether philosophical differences between cultures or religious inclination accounted for the rate of return, it was explained that enhanced political and business environments were some of the factors facilitating the return of migrants. However, Japanese women felt much freer in America than at home and would therefore prefer to stay away. Some Indians had returned to set up high tech industries and created employment at their home country.

Some of them indicated that their standard of living was falling, while others were not happy with the bad influences on their children. The returned migrants did not create impression that all was well. Therefore, the need to streamline efforts to boost benefits from returned migrants was stressed.

With regard to reflections on bonding of the highly skilled in the Ghanaian context, it was suggested that if people were bonded, the rich would pay and the clever ones among them would avoid it. Bonding would only work if people see the value in it in order to co-operate. In a situation where people have choices, merit system (incentives) should be employed to achieve the optimum results. This is because the highly skilled were in the global labour market.

It was explained that people returning for political reasons usually remain for relatively short term. For instance, many young Chinese returned to participate in the Socialist Revolution and migrated later. Similarly, during the Bangladeshi war of independence, the diaspora movements mobilised people to return and they even accepted positions in the post independence government. This demonstrates sense of nationalism of the people in the diaspora. It was noted that some Ghanaians were returning but there was no data on this phenomenon.

Session 6: Panel Discussion on 'Minimising the Risks and Maximising the Benefits of the Emigration of the Highly Skilled – what options?'

Chair: Prof. J.R.A. Aryee

Panelists: Mrs Elizabeth Adjei (GIS), Mr Paul Effah (NCTE), Dr Ken Sagoe (HRD - GHS), Baffour Abankwa (MIDA) and Mrs Adelaide Annor-Kumi (Min. of the Interior).

Ghana Immigration Service (Elizabeth Adjei)

The trend of highly skilled emigration could be positive; hence there is no need to lament. Since it was extremely difficult to forbid the movement of people, Ghana needed to strategise in order to maximise benefits and minimize risks. There was the need to improve migration literacy to manage the tide.

There was a need for systematic approach to balance the risks and benefits of international migration. Documentation of flows of people should be carried out to facilitate management of migration. It is not an exaggeration to say that Africa loses its best brains to the developed world. However, developed countries are not to be blamed since a large proportion of the emigrants are illegal immigrants. For example, about two-thirds of Ghanaians outside are illegal immigrants. Ghana is considered as a country of emigration in terms of the proportion of its population outside her border– fifth in Africa.

Brain drain was a problem to sub-Saharan Africa because a third of their graduates with skills and experience trained at the expense of the poor African taxpayer is diverted to supplement the development of the advanced countries. The excessive exodus must therefore be addressed in order to reduce poverty and promote development. The use of the moral card was not effective in dealing with the issue, so alternatives must be found.

The impacts of 'brain drain' vary among the sectors of the economy. GIS applies labour market test in granting work permit for immigrants. Most of the firms that applied for work permit for expatriate staff indicated accountants and engineers. This suggests that there is short supply of experts in these fields. Unfortunately, Ghana cannot attract labour from other developing countries to replace the emigrated highly skilled labour due to the prevailing low levels of remuneration. However, opening up of the economy has fostered the return of some Ghanaian emigrants. Nonetheless, infrastructure and policies have not been developed to deal with the problems faced by returned migrants. Thus, there is no practical evidence to show that Ghanaians resident abroad are welcome.

She suggested the following to help manage the tide: pursue talent return, incorporate migration issues in the national development plan and establish an efficient database to manage the problem

National Council for Tertiary Education (Paul Effah)

The migration of the highly skilled represented loss of qualified and talented professionals either to a country or a sector. In Ghana, education is losing staff to NGOs, banks, private sector, etc in addition to emigration; and this presents a worrying trend for the future of the country's education. He stated that there was acute shortage of academic staff in public universities. For instance, the University of Ghana has overall student-staff ratio of 39:1 compared with NCTE established ratio of 15:1. In 2003, KNUST was operating with 48.3% of its required number of faculty and 34.3% of senior administrators. The situation was similar to that of other tertiary institutions including polytechnics. Unfortunately, the effects would not be seen immediately due to the long gestation period. This situation would compromise the quality of education and threaten the knowledge base of the next generation. However, emigration of intellectuals offers them opportunity to fill in skills and knowledge gaps which enhance their potential to contribute to the development of the home country if they return. Thus, graduates need exposure to be part of the global academic community effectively.

Some of the measures required to manage the tide include:

- General improvements in remuneration and conditions of service;
- Upgrading of academic and physical facilities;
- Organise periodic training abroad to enable professionals to upgrade their skills. For instance, medical graduates should be made to identify an area for specialisation during their two-year housemanship;
- Undertake talent spotting in order to attract local and external talents; and
- Effective networking of tertiary educational institutions to promote teaching and learning as well as distance education through internet and teleconferencing.

Ghana Health Service (Human Resource Division) - Ken Sagoe

In his presentation, he indicated that GHS was facing inevitable crisis as a result of excessive exodus of trained and qualified health professionals - high attrition rate among doctors and nurses. Ghana has health worker density of 1.2 per 1000 population relative to the global average of 2.5 deemed the approximate level of staffing required to meet the MDGs. He stated that there were 9 hospitals in the country without doctors. The heavy workload on health personnel had led to many legal suits against GHS by patients due to errors occasionally committed by some health personnel. However, this information was out of public knowledge because of the numerous out-of-court settlements of the disputes. If the situation was not checked, Ghana would find it difficult to achieve the MDGs/GPRS2.

The government introduced the Additional Duty Hours Allowance (ADHA) in 1999 to motivate and retain doctors. ADHA was about two or three times the monthly salary of a doctor and was estimated to be over 800 billion cedis in 2005. The nurses were not happy with the level of ADHA that they have been receiving. In addition, Deprived Area Incentive Allowance had been introduced to attract and retain personnel in the rural areas but the reaction of the staff has not been encouraging.

He stated that value addition or career advancement is considered very critical in the medical field. In the past, the absence of postgraduate training institutions served as the launching pad for emigration of doctors. Some of the benefits included remittance which helped to pay medical bills of family members and National Health Insurance [NHIS] premium as well as donations to health institutions by philanthropists/ NGOs. He deplored the piecemeal approach to the solution of health sector problems and high turnover rate for ministers for the sector.

There were 222 Cuban health professionals working mainly in the Upper West Regions. He stated that the GHS had Staff Exchange Programme with Jamaica, but it did not work. The first two groups that were sent from Ghana to Jamaica left the country upon their arrival and Jamaica never sent any team to the country as agreed.

Recommendations

There was the need for effective leadership and political commitment to address the problems confronting the health care system. In order to move on, Ghana must take stock, invest in training programmes and offer employment to retired professionals to redress the shortage. He advocated restrictive measures including bonding (3 years) and housemanship (2 years) for nurses and doctors respectively to ensure that the health care system has access to a threshold staff to operate with.

There is need streamline the recruitment and financial clearance system. The existing 82 steps in the recruitment procedure was too frustrating. In the interim, we should encourage temporary rather than permanent return of the highly skilled in the medical field, i.e. vacation employment.

Developed countries should also assist developing countries to train more health care professionals in order to meet their domestic needs. It is of utmost importance to improve income levels, working conditions, career advancement opportunities, increase institutional capacity, etc. There is the need to intensify efforts at removing ghost names from the payroll in order to make resources available for development.

The demand on health care professionals like nurses becoming midwives and medical assistants should be curtailed. This also contributes to reduction in the stock of nurses. He advocated the dismantling of vested interests in the medical profession i.e. enrolled nurses, professionals, policy makers, etc. Provision of incentives to make people work in the three northern regions and rural areas by reducing the number of years required for one to qualify for study leave with pay (training) and promotion.

Migration for Development in Africa (Baffour Ohene Abankwa)

Return of qualified Ghanaians since 1980 totalled 230,000. It has been found that Africans can help but were not willing to return. Those who returned usually stay for a relatively short period (about three months) and return. Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) has started business and health projects with returned migrants on pilot basis. MIDA investigates business opportunities and priority areas in health for emigrants to invest in. for example, IOM invited business plans from Ghanaians in Netherlands. It is unfortunate that Ghana Investment Promotion Council (GIPC) has no strategy to tap the resources of Ghanaians abroad. Almost all incentives for investors are tailored to suit FDIs. Presidential special initiatives and GIPC were not helpful; some therefore went into small scale operations. There were attempts to form co-operatives to operate in the area of agro forestry but there was no agency to assist. For instance, there is no national strategy to help the return to settle or attract those in the diaspora.

Ministry of Interior (Adelaide Annor-Kumi)

She acknowledged the benefits of emigration to include the migrants ability to maintain connections with their home countries thereby, creating beneficial feedback effects in the form of knowledge, skills and technology transfer ('brain drain' converted into 'brain-gain'). Remittances help pay medical expenses, school fees and variety of communal expenses; build a house or set-up a small enterprise. Remittances constituted an important source of foreign

exchange earnings, accounts for US\$400 million, 20% of export earnings (ranking 4th to cocoa, gold and tourism) and 3% of GDP in 2003.

The risks posed by migration include potential destabilising effects on the national and sub-regional security, jeopardise inter-state relationship if programme for return of illegal migrants was not handled well. Excessive brain drain could also undermine development. Sometimes tensions arise between host communities and migrants giving rise to xenophobia, discrimination and other social consequences. Migration generally contributes to the spread of communicable diseases. Some migrants carry communicable diseases, and this sometimes leads to isolation, quarantine and restriction on the movement. For instance, SARS epidemic spread to over 28 countries in all continents within six months, infecting over 4,000 people and taking nearly 300 lives.

HOW TO STEM THE TIDE: *SOME SUGGESTIONS*

At the bane of migration is poverty. Developing countries have fragile economies that have to depend on the economies of developed nations. Debt servicing has impeded their capacities to improve the welfare of the people. Developing countries should be assisted to improve their economies. Poverty reduction strategies such as the Presidential Special Initiatives, micro-financing schemes for small-scale entrepreneurs and youth training schemes should be intensified in order to create more job avenues.

Improve infrastructure and other facilities in the rural areas to stem the tide of rural / urban migration and subsequently emigration. Some workers posted to rural communities refused to accept posting due to poor infrastructure. In addition, establish Migration Bureaus where full disclosures would be made about the consequences of illegal migration. This would also serve as migration observatory to build data base for Ghanaian emigrants and their skills profile.

Set up effective preventive policies to fight illegal migration e.g. use of fraudulent documents. Facilitate dialogue and exchange of information between the host countries and local immigration service to explore the possibility for employment quotas, short term employment, and bilateral recruitment opportunities for nationals considering emigrating. It is hoped that for skilled personnel who can access this facility migrating permanently would no longer be attractive. Provide technical and financial support for migrants to return home periodically to render service to their home country. There is a need for a national return plan for thousands of illegal migrants facing deportation. Migrants confronted with deportation are reluctant to come home since they have nothing to return to, such schemes would build their confidence levels. Also, encourage NGOs to work in the field of migration particularly return migrants.

In conclusion, she advocated harmonization of migration policies to help African countries participate effectively and benefit from the world trade and global market.

Sussex –Richard Black

There were dangers in stressing too much on the recruitment of Ghanaian doctors in UK. It could lead to discrimination against Ghanaian doctors. Ghana should try to restrict movement and also increase the number of trainees. Mimicking is less effective and some restrictive measures may even promote emigration. Incentive driven approaches should be adopted in order to provide people the ability to control their own destinies.

Discussion

Some participants argued that demand for a two-year housemanship for a medical doctor was not too much for someone trained at the expense of the Ghanaian tax payer. Thus, Ghanaians must face reality and add their voices to the current debate on the exodus of professional health workers rather than blaming the developed countries.

Some participants expressed shock on hearing that there were 'ghost names' (doctors) on the payroll of the Ghana Health Service. It was explained that applications for leave without pay or resignation arrive too late (6 months) when they have left the country. Efforts were underway to improve the financial system. The need to streamline management systems and thereby to improve the working environment was stressed. The participants called for concrete efforts to review the recruitment procedure in order to do away with the 82 steps. This required effective coordination in the civil service. It was suggested that bureaucracy in appointment in the public sector should be seriously checked.

With regard to the need for improvement in migration literacy, it was announced that Migration DRC at Sussex had designed short courses to help shape public opinion and would begin in the last quarter of 2005. It was suggested that information on remittances for the payment of NHS premium by emigrated health professionals would be useful to the Ghana Centre, since it constituted positive aspects of international migration.

On the absence of investment package for Ghanaians abroad, participants urged MIDA to offer suggestions to GIPC. The extent to which dual citizenship had helped Ghanaian emigrants to return, it was stated that there was no information on it.

Ineffectiveness of bonding would come as a result of lack of adequate enforcement mechanisms. The need to set the bond at economic rate to enable the state to recoup the investment in education / training of professionals was stressed. It was also pointed out that restrictive measures had unintended adverse consequences, therefore, there was the need to be careful in order not to exclude some people. The participants agreed that solutions to the emigration of the highly skilled must come from Ghanaians. China liberalized its economy and movement of people, this led to a decline in poverty between 1978 and 1998. Malaysia had 20% of its population emigrated and it is still wealthy.

Chairman's Closing Remarks

He thanked all the presenters for insights provided on the issues and encouraged them to provide information to facilitate migration management. He stated that institutional procedures for appointment should be reviewed among other things to help minimise the frustrations that people encountered. Lack of co-ordination among the ministries should also be addressed to reduce frustrations. Leadership and governance problems should be tackled as a matter of urgency. Efforts should also be made at developing people after training in order to enhance their performance.

Wrap Up

Prof. Black on behalf of the Migration DRC and organisers of the workshop thanked all the participants and invited the participants to send their comments to Meera, Anarfi or Black for inclusion in the workshop report. He commended ISSER and University of Ghana for their support and hosting the programme. He invited other staff of ISSER and RIPS to benefit from Migration DRC programmes by submitting proposals. He finally commended the Streetwise Catering Services for the delicious meals. Prof. Anarfi on his part, thanked all participants

especially the 29 who were present and mentioned that participants would be furnished with the information on the work of the DRC. On the whole, the seminar recorded a huge success.

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