



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Fostering socially inclusive societies for internal migrants in the Asia Pacific Region

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Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	Asia Pacific region China, India, Mongolia
Duration (in months):	36 months
Name and unit of project officer	Eunice Smith (Beijing Office), Marina Faetanini (New Delhi Office),
Partner(s) institutions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governmental: All China Women's Federation; Mongolia Standing Committee on Social Policy, Education, Culture, and Science; Mongolia Ministry of Environment and Green Development; Concerned ministries in India - UN system: ILO, UNICEF and UN-HABITAT - IOM - United Nations Solution Exchange network in South Asia - Local governments and municipal authorities - Relevant civil society organizations
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	USD 1,350,000

Rationale and background

Internal migration is an issue that has received much less attention at the international level. Yet, the number of people who choose to migrate within the borders of their country is too important to be ignored. For, the number of internal migrants worldwide was estimated at approximately 740 million in 2009 (UNDP 2009 Human Development Report), against approximately 210 million of international migrants in 2010. This is particularly the case in 'mega-countries', like Brazil, China and India. For example, in India, internal migrants are estimated at 400 million (Census 2011), approximately one third of the total population, whereas international migrants are estimated at 11.4 million (The World Bank, 2011). While in China there were an estimated 262.6 million rural migrant workers¹ and, more importantly, their movement often takes place within a setting marked by serious human rights concerns; both at the origin and destination locations.

Individuals are often forced to leave their homes due to rampant poverty and unemployment, regional imbalances, big infrastructure projects, the fast or slow onset of climate change and its impacts on livelihood resources, the devastating impact of man-made or natural disasters

¹ Information Office of the State Council; Progress in China's Human Rights in 2012

and patterns of marginalization and discrimination. At the same time, their arrival particularly in urban centres comes together with important challenges, such as informal and often low-remunerated work, bonded labour, hazardous living conditions, intolerance and exclusion, lack of adequate ID documentation, lack of access to social services such as education and healthcare, increased environmental degradation (Mongolia) and exclusion from political life, etc. City authorities are still by and large very reluctant to facilitate the inclusion of internal migrants in receiving societies and resort to the erection of steep barriers to discourage population mobility.

Gender issues are also a determining parameter for a considerable of this type of mobility. In addition to the other motivations, traditional gender roles and stereotypical images regarding the place of women in society often incite women to migrate. Furthermore, perceptions of gender roles are playing a determining role in the exclusion sustained by women and girls in the spaces to which they immigrate. Such considerations are the root cause of the problematic inclusion of women and girls in the education system, including in technical and vocational education and training, involvement in and contribution to decision-making processes that affect them at different levels, participation in cultural life, access to basic services such as water and sanitation. Negative stereotypes influence also the type of work for which migrant female labor is recruited (often concentrated on “female” highly unregulated occupations), which in turn results in poorer working conditions and serious abuses. Due to all these discriminatory conditions, women are more often than men caught in the vicious circle of abject poverty.

The common element in the handling of internal migration is the inadequate uptake of the challenges associated thereto by central and local policies and regulatory frameworks. If equality and the highest attainable standard of living are to be guaranteed for all internal migrants, women and men alike, such frameworks would need to be adjusted so as to explicitly address the patterns of discrimination, exclusion and poverty they face. Only under such circumstances would internal migrants, women and men alike, be able to unlock the host of opportunities for empowerment and ascension offered by such mobility, whether in terms of access to jobs, participation in decision-making and improvement of living conditions. Likewise, only a more effective handling of internal migration would allow receiving societies to fully tap in its potential for development.

Why UNESCO ?

UNESCO is best placed to develop and implement this type of project for a number of reasons. First of all, because of its approach. The Organization looks at the situation of internal migrants in a holistic way, considering that their status is affected by a multitude of interconnected factors that unless addressed in a comprehensive way, they are likely to perpetuate phenomena of exclusion. A constituent element of this approach is its focus on policy development. By mobilizing research especially on its fields of competence, the Organization attempts to promote a better understanding of the root causes of the plight of internal migrants as well as of the shortcomings preventing receiving societies from exploring their full potential. In addition, UNESCO promotes the integration of a human rights-based approach in the analysis but also in the development of appropriate policy responses. Another advantage relates to the Organization’s long experience of work on issues of internal migration in the region. UNESCO has a long history of working to promote the rights of internal migrants in China, India and Mongolia. The Organization has undertaken programs to enhance knowledge and understanding through research on internal migrants and internal migration; sensitized the wider community about the developmental contributions as well as the needs of internal migrants; engaged in enhancing the capacity of migrants and migrant networks; and advocated for improved policies that respect the rights of migrants and facilitate their social integration in the societies that they are transforming through their paid

work and mere presence. Especially in India, UNESCO has a recognized leadership within an already greatly appreciated multi-stakeholder initiative; namely the Internal Migration in India Initiative (IMII), which was launched in December 2011. Thirdly, UNESCO is a recognized neutral player, capable of federating the diversity of concerned parties, from governments, other UN and international organizations, and civil society organizations including research, universities and migrants' organizations to work on these various projects to promote migrants' rights and social inclusion. The role played within the context of the IMII is quite indicative. Last but not least, this project is part of a broader strategy of the Organization to foster the social inclusion of marginalized groups by reinforcing research-policy linkages. By being part of a larger operative plan, this project will benefit from the outcomes and lessons learnt of projects and initiatives running in parallel. Likewise, its results could reinforce UNESCO interventions on the same or connected matters either within the same region or elsewhere. The potential impact of such synergetic action is significantly greater.

Overall Goal/Objective

Contribute to the empowerment of internal migrants in China, India and Mongolia through the establishment of rights-based policy frameworks

Main expected results

Expected Result 1

Key duty-bearers and rights-holders in China, India and Mongolia empowered to design and implement rights-based policies to address the poverty and exclusion faced by internal migrants

Expected Result 2

Policy dialogues sharpened at country and sub-regional levels through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

<p>Activity 1 – expected result 1 Conduct participatory action research on key challenges facing internal migrants and particularly the most vulnerable among them and develop evidence-based policy recommendations and programmes drawing upon international human rights standards</p>
<p>Output/deliverable 1.1 Study on key challenges and policy recommendations</p>
<p>Activity 2 – expected result 1 Produce context-specific tools and deliver training to support the up-take of policy recommendations</p>
<p>Output/deliverable 2.1 Tools including policy briefs and training materials</p> <p>Output/deliverable 2.2 Training</p>
<p>Activity 3 – expected result 2 Support the establishment of participatory mechanisms at federal state and municipal levels and work with migrant communities with the view to increasing their democratic participation and voices in decision-making (for example through policy dialogues with all stakeholders, parliamentary hearings, etc.);</p>
<p>Output/deliverable 3.1 Policy dialogue platforms</p>
<p>Activity 4 - expected result 2 Expand existing national communities of practice on internal migration (policy hubs) and establish links of collaboration at sub-regional (Mongolia)</p>
<p>Output/deliverable 4.1 Communities of practice connected</p>

The specific objective of this project proposal is twofold:

- a) Strengthen the capacities of key stakeholders to design and implement rights-based policies to address the poverty and exclusion faced by internal migrants in China, India and Mongolia
- b) to reinforce initiatives already undertaken in India and China by expanding their scope and coverage to Mongolia and relevant South Asian countries
- c) to promote sub-regional and inter-regional cooperation

The following lines of action could be pursued:

- Conduct participatory action research on key challenges facing internal migrants and particularly the most vulnerable among them and develop evidence-based policy recommendations and programmes drawing upon international human rights standards;
- Support key stakeholders in Member States through technical assistance, including capacity-building on HRBA, to implement the policy recommendations;
- Support the establishment of participatory mechanisms at federal state and municipal levels and work with migrant communities with the view to increasing their democratic participation and voices in decision-making (for example through policy dialogues with all stakeholders, parliamentary hearings, etc.);

- Expand existing national communities of practice on internal migration (policy hubs) and establish links of collaboration at sub-regional (Mongolia) and inter-regional levels (for example Brazil);

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

The project is aimed at contributing to a better enjoyment of human rights by internal migrants. This will be achieved through the building of capacities of duty-bearers (i.e. line ministries, local authorities and other public entities dealing with aspects of internal migration) and rights-holders (either individual internal migrants or members of their associations or of associations focusing thereon).

All interventions, whether capacity-building or technical assistance to policy formulation will be carried out in close interaction with concerned stakeholders with the intention that their results will be fully appropriated by them.

Implementation strategy

In **China**, UNESCO will work with other UN Agencies (notably ILO and UNICEF) and the All China Women's Federation (ACWF) to establish a pilot mechanism which allows for closer linkages between the research and policy communities so that research findings could better facilitate the tailoring of policies and programs for migrants. Such a program would include the development of evidence based research and participatory migrants policies and programs on rights and access to education and training, decent work and decent housing.

In **India**, UNESCO will strengthen its association with UNICEF, UN Women and IOM, under the Internal Migration in India Initiative (IMI) to support the dissemination through policy dialogues of policy findings and recommendations to relevant stakeholders (parliamentarians, state level officials, union ministries), launch a general public awareness campaign on the myths and facts associated with migration (for instance within the context of Eradication of Poverty Day celebrations) and expand within the region (in particular to Bangladesh and Nepal) and across regions (for instance to Brazil) the content and network potential of the existing policy hub launched in December 2013: GYM - Gender Youth Migration, a sub-community of practice of the Gender Community/United Nations Solution Exchange web platform initiated and supported by UNESCO (<http://www.solutionexchange-un-gen-gym.net>).

An additional component will capitalize on the potential of community radios for facilitating intercultural dialogue among locals and migrants and for spreading messages for inclusion in both local and migrant languages. Broadcasters will be sensitized to the challenges facing migrants, women and men, and audio messages and programmes could be developed around: safety of young women migrants at risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking; access to local schools for the children of migrants; access to health for migrant women. For that purpose, this activity proposes to develop in several languages a training module for producing migrants programme for community radio personnel and organize training workshops. The training module will comprise a booklet as well as examples of radio programmes. In an expanded scope of implementation of the project covering also Bangladesh and Nepal, the vibrant network of community radios existing in those countries could play a key role.

In **Mongolia**, the project will seek first to understand key social development challenges facing rural migrants, their integration into and impact on the urban landscape, and propose strategic and operational recommendations for ensuring respect for the rights of migrants.

Consultations with affected communities, policy and decision-makers, and awareness-raising on the rights of migrants will form part of a participatory process towards social integration.

The participation of migrant communities could be best attained through a support provided to the existing network of community radios in India and in South Asia.

An integral part of the above-mentioned activities will be the gender equality perspective as gender is a crucial determinant of the status of internal migrants and the level of enjoyment of human rights, with women being more often than not doubly discriminated against.

Experiences at national level could be shared and discussed at a sub-regional level with the view to identifying possibilities for replication. Although “one size does not fit all”, important lessons can be learned from the practice in neighboring countries of the sub-region, building on the similarities on the ground. The establishment of linkages with countries in other continents that experience similar internal migration trends, like Brazil, will be explored.

Risks/challenges

Some of the risks and challenges are:

- Delays in implementation and or uptake of policy recommendations to enhance the rights of internal migrants in China, India and Mongolia due to conflicting political agendas and commitments. To reduce the risk of uptake of policy recommendations, from its initiation, the project will engage with political decision-makers at the highest level, such as the All China Women’s Federation, the Mongolia Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Policy, Education, Culture and Science. In the Indian context, UNESCO will be mobilizing to that end the close partners involved in the IMII. While delays in implementation caused by shifting political landscape and agendas (notably in Mongolia) are more difficult to manage, in implementing the project UNESCO will work with a wide cross-section of local actors to build ownership and commitment that transcends political boundaries and focuses on the rights of internal migrants.
- A practical challenge specific to Mongolia is that UNESCO is a non-resident UN agency. This hurdle will be overcome through working with longstanding UNESCO implementing partners and utilization of the Mongolia National Commission for UNESCO to ensure project implementation monitoring during gap periods when UNESCO personnel is not present in Mongolia.
- Another operational challenge is possible rotation of staff and subsequent delays before the new staff comes on board; the same risk derives from possible change of faces on the side of local partners and notably of policy makers.

Sustainability and exit strategy

By building the capacities of key stakeholders the project aims at empowering them to manage and to participate in a rights-based policy formulation in favour of the rights of internal migrants. These capacities will accompany the targeted stakeholders in future interventions. Also, the ultimate goal of the project is to feed into the creation of a conducive policy environment on internal migrants in each country. Another strong point derives from the fact that the above interventions are based on accumulated experience and existing partnerships in China and India. Therefore, the project builds upon a very good knowledge of the problem and the challenges associated thereto. Last but not least, the sub-regional dimension will reinforce the analysis of internal mobility patterns and enrich the search for sustainable solutions drawing upon what is successful in the neighborhood.