

## WP9: Leveraging ICT to Address Inequality

### Co-Investigators

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### Research Context

Digital technologies are increasingly playing a key role in the migration journey from migrant decision making, orientation and route planning to eventual integration into host communities and connecting with those left behind. However, the use of digital technologies in the migration context harbours opportunities not only for good but also for harm. Digital technologies can be leveraged to increase access to opportunities and rights for migrants, boosting migration's developmental benefits at the interface between migrants and host communities. Yet structural inequalities in migration contexts mean that access and use is almost always socially contingent often leading to new inequalities.

This intervention work package focuses on leveraging ICTs to address the inequalities associated with migration in a threefold manner: first, we want to learn from migrants in these corridors about the many very different ways in which they use digital technologies; second, we wish to explore with them how they understand notions of inequality within the migration process, and how they think technologies might be able to reduce them; and ultimately, we would like to work with migrants and digital developers in the corridor countries to develop one or more digital technology that can be used to reduce such inequalities. We are currently working in the following South-South migration corridors: Ethiopia-South Africa, Ghana-China, Haiti-Brazil and Nepal-Malaysia.

Our approach derives explicitly from six underlying principles: to work with migrants; to learn from migrants; to work with, support and learn from Hub colleagues in country corridors and other work packages; to focus specifically on helping to create technologies that reduce inequality; to involve migrants centrally in designing and creating any technological solutions; to help empower migrants.

Our work plan includes the following set of activities organised into three stages:

#### *Stage 1: Years 1-2 (flexible)*

- Literature review of ICT use by migrants and information on ICT. We will make the most important information available through a special section of our website accessed via <https://ict4d.org.uk/technology-inequality-and-migration/resources-on-migrants-and-digital-technologies>.
- A small set of core questions to be incorporated in the hub-wide household survey to explore how migrants are currently using technology in all corridors.

- Inclusion of key questions in the interviews and focus groups conducted by corridor researchers about how and why migrants and their families use technologies. We will together seek to explore comprehensive understanding of how migrants of different types currently use technologies. This might also involve research methods such as diaries and video reportage.

### *Stage 2: Years 2-3 (flexible)*

Building on the first stage above, the central purpose will be to understand how migrants construct the notion of inequality, and how they think that technologies might be used to reduce these inequalities. The precise areas of focus will depend on what has emerged in Stage 1, and on whether colleagues in the corridors and other WPs identify particular issues on which to focus. This stage will also begin to explore relationships in depth with local digital developers to see who might be interested in co-creating technologies in Stage 3. Activities will include:

- In-depth repeat interviews with small numbers of migrants
- A series of in-depth focus groups with migrants and employers
- Demonstrations of types of technologies (devices, apps, policies/regulatory factors etc) to explore their possible use with migrants.

By the end of year 3 there will be a clear indication of the sorts of digital technologies that we might develop as an intervention to serve the needs of migrants, whilst also focusing on inequalities. For instance, in relation to inequalities caused by intermediaries, we might focus on the use of digital technologies by migrants to bypass many of the actions of intermediaries. Other options might be to develop online pre-migration resources and training for migrants, or to develop software to enable migrants travelling across several countries to be able to have access to regularly updated resources.

### *Stage 3: Years 3-5*

Working with a small group of diverse migrants and developers, we would explore potential digital technology interventions that could be implemented over the next two years. We would also pursue avenues of funding, in addition to the flexible funding available for this intervention, through which this could be achieved. We would draw on the UNESCO Chair in ICT4D's networks here, and on the advice from our WP9 International Advisory Board. Any intervention will need to be piloted and trialled before it is finally released. Particular attention will be paid to the sustainability of any technological solution, and to this end we will seek to involve local businesses and entrepreneurs in the ownership of any initiatives that we develop together.

## **Research Questions**

1. How and why do migrants, their families, intermediaries and employers currently use varying types of digital technologies?
2. How do they understand notions of inequality, and what would their priorities be for using digital technologies to reduce these inequalities?

3. How can we work together to implement such uses of digital technologies, thereby reducing inequalities associated with migration?

These questions will be refined specifically in the contexts of each corridor (Ethiopia-South Africa, Ghana-China, Haiti-Brazil and Nepal-Malaysia), and will be addressed through the use of a range of different methodologies adapted to local contexts, including semi-structured interviews (SSIs), focus groups (FGs), diaries (Ds), and technology workshops (TWs).

We will also provide a set of specific questions linked to the above three broad questions for the quantitative household survey and will thus seek to combine qualitative and quantitative methods in our subsequent analysis.

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