

Hub-wide survey: migrants, migrant households, returnees

CASE STUDY



AUTHORS

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MIDEQ: MIGRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT & EQUALITY

While South-South migration accounts for nearly half of all international migration, research and policy discussions tend to focus on movements from countries in the Global South to countries in the Global North. Moreover, the lack of existing research and data on migration *between* the countries of the Global South means that research has drawn heavily on theoretical and empirical frameworks associated with migration to the Global North. To shift this focus, MIDEQ is currently undertaking an interdisciplinary Hub-wide survey which will:

- Describe migrants' perceptions, knowledge and decision-making patterns, and examine factors that influence these variables;
- Explore the role of migration intermediaries in facilitating mobility in specific corridors, and associated variations in migration outcomes;
- Examine the resource flows associated with migration between countries, including financial flows, trade and knowledge;
- Investigate gender inequalities, rights and resources in origin and destination countries;
- Explore the experiences of children who migrate with or without their families, those born to migrants in destination countries and those 'left behind';
- Examine the relationship between poverty, social inequalities and international migration;
- Identify formal/informal participation, social integration, mobilisation and organisation used by migrants in destination countries;
- Describe employment and work conditions among migrants, and identify factors associated with labour exploitation;
- Identify risks to migrants' health and safety and services use;
- Explore migrants' and migrant households' access to and use of information, communication and technology;
- Examine the effect of different migration trajectories and experiences on the mental health of migrants;
- Describe experiences of violence among migrants and identify factors associated with violence and abuse; and
- Capture cultural responses to migration.

Data collection for the MIDEQ surveys was scheduled to begin in March 2020 but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Only two countries (Burkina Faso and Haiti) started the survey field data collection in 2020; the remaining countries delayed survey collection until 2021 with Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire starting in January 2021. The survey has been scaled back as a result of the UKRI funding cuts and is now only taking place in three corridors (Haiti-Brazil, China-Ghana and Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire). Data collection for the survey has now been completed in all six countries. A total of 8,800 respondents have participated in the survey to date with an anticipated final sample size of 5,130 respondents.

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The MIDEQ Hub-wide survey is of significance for the following reasons:

- Unlike many of the earlier migration surveys that focus on *either* households in sending *or* destinations countries, the MIDEQ surveys gather data from migrants and non-migrant households in the origin countries as well as individual migrants in the destination countries and returnees in their countries of origin;
- The surveys have been developed and delivered in ODA recipient countries where there is a general paucity of data on migration, partly because of weak systems for collecting migration data from administrative sources, and lack of resources to conduct migration surveys. The Hub-wide survey has significantly increased the knowledge, skills and experience of partners in the Global South to undertake large scale comparative survey data collection and analysis;
- The large sample sizes are a significant achievement, given the fact that it is extremely difficult to secure information from migrants who are often described as 'hard to reach' populations;
- The ability to adopt innovative health and safety protocols to conduct surveys in the context of COVID-19, significant political instability and social violence (in the case of both Haiti and Burkina Faso) is a significant achievement.

The MIDEQ project has enabled CMS to generate rich data on migration along the China-Ghana corridor. The Ghana team has completed the Hub-wide survey with 1,268 Chinese migrants in Ghana. This is the first time a large survey has been conducted with Chinese migrants in Ghana. The team has also conducted qualitative interviews with 80 Chinese migrants and 32 Ghanaians who have returned from China.

Both the survey design process and its implementation have entailed a well-integrated and rigorous interdisciplinary approach which combines epistemological paradigms from the social sciences, creative arts, and behavioural sciences. Numerous webinars and meetings were organised to share ideas and experiences on the planning and implementation of the surveys in various countries. This ensured mutual learning and capacity building of researchers in different countries. While the LSHTM team is responsible for coordinating the survey design, the Hub's Co-investigators from a range of disciplinary backgrounds worked with the LSHTM team to design the survey protocols and questionnaire. Unlike previous migration surveys that were purely based on social science methodologies, creative arts approaches to data collection and documentation of data collection were integrated into the MIDEQ survey design and implementation in all the countries. The interdisciplinary design of the survey challenges the disciplinary silos which are used in survey construction and responds to the urgent needs of development policy makers for quantitative data which relates to culture and arts in the Global South.

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As noted above, the Hub-wide survey makes a significant contribution to knowledge for the following reasons:

- *Focus on two-way flows and impacts:* unlike most existing migration surveys, the MIDEQ Hub survey is being undertaken with migrants, migrant households, returnees and those 'left behind' in both origin and destination countries. This represents a subtle but important conceptual, discursive and methodological shift which is enabling the Hub to unsettle prevailing assumptions about migration and offers the potential for new theoretical analysis and policy formulation;
- *Interdisciplinary survey design and questions:* the Hub-wide survey includes cultural questions generated by WP11 which are being asked at scale for the first time. The information gathered through these questions will be analysed through the audit and assessment processes of the arts, using hermeneutic frameworks; interpretivist paradigms; decolonising methodologies; a phenomenological double break; participatory, co-designed, practice-led artistic processes both within migratory and cultural groupings.
- *Innovative approach to sampling:* a mixture of probabilistic and non-probability sampling techniques has been adopted to deal with the challenges associated with sampling from the small numbers and relative geographical dispersion of migrant populations in destination countries. We have already shared our sampling approaches at several webinars, and we plan to publish articles on our methodology and comparative data analysis approach.



Cover image

Farmer supplies data to an enumerator. Photo by International Institute of Tropical Agriculture. CC BY-NC 2.0

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