Migration and Development: Evidence for Action

From the Desk of Senior Regional Project Director

Few months back, EMPHASIS organized a regional consultation on migration and development in Delhi, India. Participants representing respective governments, UN agencies, IOM, academia, media, private sectors, civil society networks and I/NGOs from Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Thailand collectively reflected over various aspects of migration and development. The two days event was instrumental in creating a regional space for collective dialogues on innovation, challenges and opportunities around migration and development. For EMPHASIS this was also an opportunity to share its learning that have emerged from a comprehensive program at source, transit and destination.

Over the years, we have noted that remittance debate has largely dominated the discourse of migration. Though issues around migrants’ vulnerability have been some of the key debates in media; it yet has to get a central space within broader migration discourse, policy and planning processes. The fact is that besides ‘billion dollars contribution’ through remittances, migrants are constantly facing various forms of violence starting from source to transit and destinations. The reality is that there is an absence of well managed migration system and effective governance as a result the aspirations around ‘wellbeing’ of migrants are limited to theory and there is a long way to implement them in practice.

Midst of policy debates, the (UN) Declaration of High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development is one of the milestones towards recognizing migration as development agenda. This process however needs to be grounded and prioritized by governments, donors and civil society which would definitely contribute towards achieving development aspirations as well as in ensuring wellbeing of migrants.

Within these broader contexts, EMPHASIS offers learning experiences around various aspects of migration. The overall programmatic learning as well as changes that are taking place at individual levels have inspired us. Besides many other initiatives over the last four years, we are fascinated with life changing stories from the field. One of such stories is about migrant women and women left at home in the Far West of Nepal playing a key role to open bank accounts in source and encouraging their spouses and relatives to send money through banks and private money transfers from destinations. We have noticed that in a limited time frame almost 700 families have opened bank accounts and we have been observing increasing trend of sending remittances through money transfer which is helping to grow a culture of saving in the Far West of Nepal where a major chunk of population moves to various Indian cities as labor migrants. This has also helped to reduce incidences of violence in the transit. In a context where, a little saving culture has been noticed for decades due to various reasons; this new trend could help migrant’s families to save their earning and also give a sense of economic empowerment to women at home and changing power relations at various levels.

Similarly, women groups from migrant families in Nepal, India and Bangladesh are emerging as potential leaders and change makers in their local contexts. At a time when migration patterns and policies are still patriarchal, the women leadership emerging from communities will make a difference in the long run.

With this note, we are pleased to share with you Volume 8 of our newsletter along with different perspectives on migration, learning from EMPHASIS, community practices and voices from our partners. For details, we encourage you to visit our website www.care-emphasis.org.

Prabodh Devkota-Senior Regional Project Director

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Balancing the Discourse: Migration Impact on Origin, Destination and Transit Countries

Binod Khadria

There are three sets of countries involved in the process of international migration: Origin, Transit and Destination countries. As a country of origin of the so-called migrant ‘knowledge workers’ in the 21st century, India has drawn worldwide attention. There has been almost a fray for not only Indian IT professionals, but also the nurses, the biotechnologists, the financial managers, the scientists, the architects, the lawyers, the teachers and so on among the destination countries. The German Green Card, the American H1-B visa, the British work permit, the Canadian investment visa, the Australian student visa, the New Zealand citizenship – had all been proactive to acquire Indian talent embodied in workers as well as students. Traditionally branded as ‘brain drain’ since the 1960s, the impact of migration of such highly educated Indians was seen as a financial investment loss in education, a social skill loss of trained personnel, and as the loss of catalysts of necessary political change in the exodus of young unemployed graduates.

Conversely, the primary benefits have been identified as the monetary remittances sent home by the migrant workers, the transfer of technology through programmes like the UN’s TOKTEN (Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals) was initiated by the UNDP in 1977 with a view to countering the adverse effects of ‘brain drain’ in the developing countries programme, and the return migration of those Indians further educated and experienced abroad. Consequently, the perception of the negative impacts have changed with shifts in the paradigm - from “brain drain” of the 1960s and 1970s to “brain bank” of the 1980s and 1990s (The term “brain bank” as an alternative to “brain drain” was suggested by Rajiv Gandhi soon after he became the Prime Minister of India in 1984. He extended the rationale that the prosperous and talented Indians living abroad were a pool of resources that India could potentially draw upon for support in its quest for development), and subsequently to “brain gain” in the 21st century.

The term “brain gain” was brought into prominence by the west at the turn of the century, when their economic crisis drove many Indians into returning home – ironically to new opportunities in India. Interestingly, this was interpreted by the west as more than any reasonable compensation of the erstwhile losses that India might have incurred through the brain drain, and the origin countries seem to have lapped up the term. The complete turnaround is reflected in the ongoing euphoria over increasing immigration in developed countries, mainly the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Australia, and New Zealand, and so on. This has led to a major paradigm shift in India too – to look at migration as a process leading to formation and enlargement of the ‘Indian Diaspora’, an option for turning the challenge of migration into an opportunity, and therefore gainful.

What is required, however, for sustainable socio-economic benefits to the country is that two specific conditions are met: A ‘necessary condition’ of dominant or significant global geo-economic presence of the Indian workers; and a ‘sufficient condition’ of India deriving sustainable gains from that global geo-economic presence. In terms of the large demand for Indian skilled as well as unskilled workers abroad, and the migrants establishing excellent track records of accomplishment in the labour markets of the destination countries, the first condition has more or less been met. To satisfy the sufficient condition of India deriving significant gains from the global geo-economic presence of the Indian migrants, the flows of remittances, transfer of technology and knowledge, and return migration must all be directed not ‘top down’ but ‘bottom up’ – not only or largely towards trade and business but mainly towards the removal of two kinds of poverty in India – the ‘poverty of education’ and the ‘poverty of health’ – areas where migration has so far failed to change the society in this country of origin by contributing to its economic and social development. Large masses of the illiterate and uneducated population, incapacitated further by their poor health status are the root causes of India having one of the lowest levels of average productivity of labour, and therefore lowest average wages in the world – a paradox when Indian Diaspora members, on the average, figure amongst the largest contributing ethnic communities in their countries of destination. For example, it is indeed paradoxical that the average per-hour contribution of each employed worker within India to the production of India’s gross domestic product (GDP) has remained amongst the lowest in the world – a mere 37 cents as compared to
the United States’ 37 dollars, i.e., one-hundredth of the latter in the year 1999. The average productivity of labour per hour (even in terms of purchasing power parity) was US$ 2.15 in 1999, which has increased to only US$ 3.27 in 2008. This is still extremely low when compared with most other countries, pushing India to rank 57th out of 57 countries (down from its rank in a list of 47 countries in 1999). This is naturally ironical, because the same average Indian employed abroad contributes very high average share to the GDP of the destination country where one settles and works. The Indian Diaspora networks and associations abroad could, therefore, play the catalyst’s role – be it economically, politically or culturally – in raising the average productivity of mass Indian workers at home by thinking health and education in India as areas of Diaspora engagement. What is at stake is not any kind of charity but their own long-term interest of empowering the mass of consumers, who are otherwise not adequately ‘backed by purchasing power’, to buy the products they want to sell in the ‘large’ markets of an expanding economy, rather than focusing mainly on small gains from immediate ‘profit-making’ ventures in industry and business.

This sets a “double challenge” of public policy for a major emigration country like India: First, to convince its own Diaspora community to rethink the development process in India as a “bottom up” creation and enhancement of sustainable productivities of labor through development of education and health rather than a “top down” development through participation in business and industry – one comprehensive, the other dispersed; one long-term, the other immediate. It is not just a matter of willingness; in many instances, it would entail long periods of struggle in creating those decision-making and priority-setting discerning capabilities amongst the leaders of the Diaspora community. Secondly, India must be able to convince the countries of destination (and the transit countries as well) to distinguish between most ‘painful’ and most ‘gainful’ socio-economic impacts of migration of its workers – both skilled and unskilled.

One thing emerges from the above discussion though: There are three things that ought to receive urgent attention of researchers and policy makers: First, the central focus of the migration impact discourse has remained on the interest and well-being of the origin country, the first set. However, what remains even to be noticed is that the so-called “origin country” is defined in a stereotypically limiting way – “home country” narrowly understood in terms of the effects exclusively on the people physically present within its sovereign geographical territory, rather than a more relaxed, inclusive and wider definition that would include the people of the country irrespective of the location of their physical presence in a globalised and interconnected world. If the ‘origin country’ could be defined more holistically so as to include the interest and well-being of all the citizens of the country, including the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) spread in other countries of the world too, then that would add a new dimension to the migration impact discourse. For India, this would facilitate a fusion between two disjointed discourses – on the “brawn drain” of its innumerable unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the Gulf-countries with that on the “brain drain” of its highly-skilled workers and students in the western countries. Indian Diaspora in the developed western countries would then no longer be necessarily fixated with the development of the so-called “home country”, but “home people” through what I have elsewhere called a “Third-country-Development” (TcD) model, and be concerned with the plight of the Indian migrant workers in the middle-east too.

Secondly, there are emerging contours of benefits to the second set of countries involved – the destination countries – that have remained uncharted so far and need to be brought to the centre-stage: The three advantages of what I have often called ‘Age’, ‘Wage’, and ‘Vintage’ accruing to the destination countries. These are the advantages derived through higher migrant turnover in-built in temporary and circularity immigration, and operationalized, respectively, by (a) bringing in younger migrants to balance an ageing population, (b) keeping the wage and pension commitments low by replacing older and long-term migrants with younger and short-term migrants, and (c) stockpiling latest vintage of knowledge embodied in younger cohorts of skilled workers and students. Thus, given the appropriate help, resources, and local support, one type of migrants – the suspected ‘social parasite’ – has become the other, the social boons, or as someone has phrased it, the white West’s ‘great off-white hope’!

Thirdly, the talk about the impact on the third set of countries involved in international migration – the so-called “transit countries” – has remained a more distant cry, and also needs to be brought into the central fold of the migration impact discourse urgently. Simultaneously with the balancing of the impact discourse by refocusing it on the destination and transit countries with weights comparable to that on the “origin country”, duly redefined to include its people worldwide, an “equitable adversary analysis” in multilateral fora would help origin countries like India press for international norms in negotiations around the issue of migration impact. As I have often stressed, the instability of visa regimes underlying the “open-and-shut policy” of the destination countries, and the vulnerability of the migrants (and now diplomats too!) to arbitrariness of consular practices in destination countries could be the two key aspects of socio-economic legal dimensions in international migration that India and other major countries of origin ought to broach at multilateral dialogues for negotiating them out of international migration.

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Migration and the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Taheen Alam

Human mobility within and across nations has become an integral part of the social, economic and development agenda in today’s world. Across the globe, migration is on the rise with one in every seven people on the move. There are emerging studies on the immense contributions that migrants make to the origin and destination countries both in terms of economic impact and social and cultural contributions. A recent World Bank Report states that the developing world will receive $414 billion in remittances in 2013 with India leading the list with an estimated $71 billion in officially recorded remittances. In spite of such significant contributions to national economies migration is still largely excluded from development frameworks.

Additionally, what is not so well understood are the challenges and vulnerabilities that migrants face along the continuum of mobility. Low skilled labor migrants are generally relegated to the margins of society, with little or no access to minimum wages, holidays or days-off from work, and lack of access to social security benefits. Migrant workers also usually have very limited options to unionize or bargain for their rights and entitlements collectively.

In spite of the challenges, migration does take place and migrants have direct and multiple impacts on the development of both countries of origin and destination. In this context, it is critical for Governments to promote an enabling environment for migrants so as to enjoy the full benefits of their contribution. A well-managed migration system and effective governance would be crucial to address the gaps in the existing system which lead to abuse, exploitation and inefficient utilization of migrants’ resources. The Declaration at the 2013 UN HLD on Migration and Development is an important milestone towards acknowledging migration as a key factor for sustainable development and recognizing the human rights of migrants.

Since migration is an issue that affects not just one country or region but the entire world community; and has significance for addressing other priority issues like poverty alleviation, gender equity and climate change, it is important that migration be included in the post 2015 development agenda. The IOM position paper on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda says that although “there were references to migration in the Millennium Declaration, specific goals or targets for migration were not included in the MDG framework itself”. However, migration has emerged as one of the “big development questions confronting the international community” and therefore there is broad consensus on including it in the new framework.

In 2013, South Asians were the largest group of international migrants living outside of their home region. A majority of the migrants, however, move within the region. Currently about half of all migrants are women and a considerable number migrate from South Asia. In fact, in 2010, about 6.45 million international female migrants originated from South Asia. With the increasing ‘feminization of migration’ women are becoming financially independent and the phenomenon is leading to interesting changes both at the individual and societal level. But women’s contributions to migration and development are not being formally acknowledged, in part because the data is imprecise. Indeed the most important impediment to an understanding of the migration of women to the Gulf has been the lack of systematic data and information on the dimensions of the migration cycle. At the same time, women migrants are also at greater risk of exploitation and suffer physical and sexual violence, hardship, economic exploitation, isolation, stigma and discrimination. Because of labor market segregation and discrimination, women migrants are more likely to work in unregulated sectors, and informal or “off the book” industries and services.

There is a need, therefore, of focusing on comprehensive policies and programs to make migration an experience of dignity by making migration safe and reducing vulnerabilities women migrant workers face. The post-2015 development agenda would do well to reflect on the specific vulnerabilities of women migrants as they form an increasingly significant proportion of the overall mobility.

Migration is a sensitive issue and one that involves negotiations between unequal political partners in terms of sending and receiving countries. It has generally been seen that sending countries usually do not have too much of a voice while negotiating for the rights of their workers abroad. It is, therefore, important to have a new global agreement as part of the next development agenda and outline specific recommendations on the roles of both sending and receiving countries.

At the national levels, countries would be encouraged to include migration in their development strategies; facilitate migration through improved financial inclusion for mobile population, inclusion in the national labor laws and social security schemes, etc. At the international level, closer-cooperation between agencies would help in sharing good practices from across the world. A set of indicators to monitor the progress of countries across the globe on pre-determined categories would help to monitor progress on the same.

In these broader contexts, the learning from Enhancing Mobile Populations’ Access to HIV and AIDS Services, Information and Support (EMPHASIS) implemented by CARE International could be useful for all the stakeholders to understand issues, contexts, challenges, opportunities and to design development programs around migration.

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1 Migration and Development Brief, World Bank, October 2, 2013
2 Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, October 1, 2013
3 IOM and the World We Want Post-2015
A qualitative study was conducted among 60 migrants and family members, and 5 key informants in four locations—two at the destination site of Delhi and two at the source site of Nepal, to assess the influence of the EMPHASIS project in addressing HIV vulnerabilities, and at the same to enquire into whether intercountry passage has been made safer for migrants. Local partner NGOs helped in purposively sampling and recruiting study participants who were then interviewed by trained researchers with the aid of semi-structured interview guides. Content analysis was conducted in Atlas TI which included comparisons across three levels: (1) services received at destination and services received at source (2) Husband and wife both receiving services versus only one receiving the service (3) Spouses reached by service versus those not reached by service.

Findings indicated easy accessibility to HIV prevention and treatment services at both source and destination although the nature of utilization depended on contextual social mores and physical factors such as distance to facilities. Therefore, while destination sites at Delhi saw a high rate of HIV testing among the study sample, it was less so in Nepal due to distance to testing facilities and female spouses’ limited mobility because of their work and of conditions imposed by living in joint families. Where facilities were at a distance, outreach workers and peer educators filled gaps in knowledge, so much so that the majority of the study sample reached by the project was found to possess an adequate knowledge of transmission and prevention of HIV and AIDS compared to those not reached by services of the project. Another indicator of the reach of the project was seen in the positive changes in attitudes reported by the participants toward the disease and PWHIV, which they attributed to the new knowledge and information gained from peer educators. A principal finding of the study indicated the important role that spousal communication played in changes in behaviors and attitudes. Among men, changes in behavior related to alcohol use, visiting sex workers and condom use. Among women, changes were reported in using condoms with husbands and in discussing about HIV with their husbands, friends and family members. These changes happened more commonly when both husband and wife received services – husband at destination and wife at source or both at destination- than when neither or only one received services, thus highlighting the essentiality of HIV prevention intervention reaching both husband and wife. Furthermore, discussions on adoption of safe sexual behaviors were initiated more or less by female spouses – an empowering role enabled by the project. Talking and discussing with their peers about HIV was another pattern seen among men who reported changing their behaviors. With regard to other support services, the majority of respondents reported changes at transit routes, in terms of uniform rates of transporters and less harassment from the police while crossing the border. Nevertheless, certain gaps in the services were observed which points to the need to increase coverage of most Nepali migrants in destination and spouses at source districts, make HIV testing services more accessible in source districts, and focus on removing misperception in HIV information. Among recommendations, the findings suggest the introduction of couple counseling on husbands’ visits, encouragement of spousal communication and peer communication, and expansion of HIV information services at transit routes.

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Making Migration Work
Graeme Storer

Migration can be risky (especially for undocumented migrants), and the EMPHASIS project has collected numerous case stories of labor migrants being exploited and discriminated against, harassed and intimidated. For these reasons, addressing the vulnerabilities of migrant populations experience across the mobility Continuum and promoting safety and dignity has been central to the EMPHASIS agenda. Despite this migration is for most people a positive and empowering experience.

Historically migration has largely been a masculine domain. More recently though an increasing number of South Asian women are migrating in search of better livelihood opportunities to support their families. They are becoming economic actors, rather than dependent migrants as before. Migration now offers women a choice to work, to become financially independent and to play a role in lifting their families out of poverty. In following this path, women migrants challenge power relations within the family and worn out notions about their place “at home.”Putul explained why she took on the role of breadwinner in her family:

My husband and I have two sons (aged 18 and 16) and one daughter (aged 12). My elder son had to leave school in class nine, as we didn’t have enough money at the time. But the younger son is now in class 10 and preparing for the Secondary School Certificate exam. My daughter is studying in class six in a local school.

In 2009 we were struggling. It felt like we’d always been struggling. It was very difficult to manage food costs and school costs for the children. My husband is a farmer and he works on our own small piece of land. But he’s lazy. He does as little as possible and doesn’t provide much. I was from a poor family and used to hard work. So, given the circumstances, I decided to go to India to support my family. My brother-in-law helped me to make the arrangements... It cost me Bangladeshi Taka 2,000 (approx. US$250.00). I went to Mumbai. It was really hard in the first year... to find a sound job. But then I found a job in a factory, making cutlery. It paid 10,000 Indian rupees (US$165) per month. I shared a room with four other women working in the factory. I lived as cheaply as possible only spending money on the basics and I saved money. I sent money to my husband every two weeks through a money broker. This meant my family started a more regular life and the children stayed in school.

I came back to Bangladesh in mid-2013. Now I am arranging to send my oldest son to Malaysia. I have already paid the fee of Taka 300,000 (US$3,750.00). If we are successful in getting him a contract in Malaysia, then I will not need to go back to Mumbai. I really want my younger son and only daughter to complete their study, especially my daughter so that she can avoid always having to fight like I have since childhood. I am happier now with my present situation, even though the past was painful. I feel I have left that behind.

Putul’s story is one of agency. Given her circumstances and a husband that couldn’t pull his weight, Putul made a choice to leave her children and join the large number of undocumented migrants who look for work across borders. She needed to leave home if she was to break from the cycle of poverty and disappointment she had lived in for so long. She worked hard. She sometimes felt alone. She saved money and she returned to more solid prospects.

Kavitha is 29 and has two boys aged 5 and 7. She came to Mumbai in 2006 as an “accompanying” spouse. But since arriving in Mumbai, she has been able to learn new skills and grow the confidence that was always beneath the surface. For her migration has been a positive experience.

My mother died when I was only 4 years old. But… my father said he did not want me to grow up missing my mother, and so I was given lots of love from my father and relatives. When I finished high school, I wanted to be a schoolteacher. But at 18 I was married and all my dreams were shattered. My mother and father in-law were very strict. I wasn’t allowed to speak. I wasn’t allowed to go out of the house! There were so many restrictions imposed on me by my in-laws. My husband was studying for a Bachelor’s degree at the time and he wasn’t financially independent. So we both had to bite our tongues. He was always under pressure. In his final year, he failed one subject and he decided to migrate to India for work. He came to Mumbai, leaving me alone with his family for a year. It was intolerable. And then he came back and said to his parents: “Why don’t I take Kavitha back with me. She is not doing anything here. She should come with me.” They agreed, and I moved with him.

For the first two years, I had no idea of the outside world or of the other Nepalese migrants. I never stepped out and only talked to the women living nearby. And then I met the EMPHASIS outreach worker, Yashoda. She had let people know that she was looking for someone to work as a peer educator, someone who could read and write. My neighbors knew that I had finished high school, and so they told her to ask me. Before I got married, I had worked briefly with a women’s organization in Nepal. So when Yashoda approached me I said: “I don’t know anything about HIV, but I do know something about working with women.” I wasn’t sure at first, but I agreed to take it on. After attending some training, I started. I began by going from door to door.
EMPHASIS project, has allowed her to in-laws. She felt isolated and insecure. When her husband left for Mumbai, Kavitha have freedom in their lives. pictured I went through. They should (in Pokhara). I used to be so submissive can see how I have developed. She has started asking me: “When are you going easy, and there were lots of challenges talking to people in groups… even talking to just one person was hard for me. Some of the teenage boys used to tease me and call me condom bhabi (bhabi is sister-in-law). And other women didn’t want to talk to me about STIs and condoms. That was hurtful, like they weren’t accepting me. But slowly their attitudes changed towards me. Now the women who used to laugh at me are telling me about their STI problems and coming to self-help group meetings.

But as I learned more, I grew more confident. Participating in project workshops helped me to practice talking about HIV and migration. Now I feel I can easily talk to community people. I share IEC materials with them and can use the wooden penis to demonstrate the proper use of condoms. I’ve referred women for STI treatment at the Community Clinic and for VCT, and I accompany women to the VCT Centre.

I’ve also grown braver in my personal life. When my husband came back from India I told him to use a condom during sexual intercourse. At first he got angry and asked why I was asking him to do that. So I talked to him about the benefits of condom use. And he calmed down. We both went and tested our blood at the VCT Centre. We were both negative.

Nowadays my husband is back home and working as a moto-taxi, taking people from one place to another on his motorbike. We are staying nearby the border, and so many people migrate along this route. My husband talks to them about safe mobility. He has also talked on his phone to his friends still in India about condom use.

What do I feel most proud of? Last year, EMPHASIS asked me to participate in the annual review workshop in Jessore. They invited me as a representative of a women’s Self Help Group. I spoke in the opening session. It was a great honor for me to be asked to speak in front of such a big group of people. The Civil Surgeon and other important guests were there. I never thought I could do something like this. And I felt proud when we jointly raised our voices to reduce stigma and discrimination for one PWHIV. When Hamina’s husband died, somehow people found out he had died because of AIDS. Everyone started gossiping about what they had been doing when they were living in India. And they gossipied about her working as a sex worker. They were talking about getting her banned from the village. So a group of us women got together and started talking about HIV and AIDS to community members and about their wrong ideas. We also asked the union parishad chairman and committee members for support. There has been a significant change in the community. Hamina is now engaged in the Self Help Group, and community people are speaking to her. She reads Arabic sitting together with others. She is included in community activities.
**Migration Provided a New Life...**

I am Rahman (35) worked as a caretaker of a mosque and graveyard in Mumbai. In 2008 I had no option but to migrate from Bangladesh to Mumbai without taking my family. I used to do a small business in Bangladesh where I used to sell some street foods (Chanachur: crushed and dried lentils mixed with hot spices, nimky: the crunchy snack made of flour and sugar, and kurma: a crunchy sweet) in the market and public places. Unfortunately I did not make any profit from my business rather I lost about 150000 BDT ($1782) within one year. To recover this situation I had to take loan from various sources. I took loan from my father, from one of the NGOs and from some of my relatives. I had to sell my wife's jewelry too. For the second time I could not make any profit from my business and could not pay back my creditors. In this situation I became frustrated and decided to go to India with the help of a broker. I paid 4500 taka ($38) to the broker. When I arrived in Mumbai I met one of my neighbors who had got Indian citizenship and settled there. With his help I was engaged as a caretaker of a mosque and graveyard. Through this work I earned 7000 to 8000 Indian Rupee ($133) per month.

Over the last five years I have benefitted a lot from migration. I paid all credits back to the creditors. Before I had a thatched house, now I built a new house where wall material is made of brick and roof is corrugated iron sheets. In the courtyard I have set up a tube well and sanitary latrine. Due to economic crisis I had to stop my education. Now my daughter is continuing her schooling and she reads in class four. I can afford my daughter's schooling cost.

As a loan defaulter people had a negative attitude towards me, after paying all their credit back now I have developed a good relationship with them. I have contributed some money to construct a mosque in our village. In September 2013 I have returned in Bangladesh. Recently, I have rented a shop for 150,000 BDT ($1782) and planning to set up a small restaurant as early as possible.

By this time one outreach worker from EMPHASIS Bangladesh discussed with me about safe migration and HIV and AIDS. When I was in Mumbai I met another NGO staff who distributed condoms and discussed about STI and HIV and AIDS. My wife was also a member of Women Self Help Group in Bangladesh. I am happy with my life.

**Rosina: Contributing to Family Income...**

I am Rosina (35) who was tired of struggling with day to day life after having a double divorce. My 1st husband was a smuggler who was in jail for five years and spread rumors about me. My second husband also left me. I used to work as a hawker and sell sari to maintain my family expenditure but I was unable to do that because I could not make any profit from this business. I had to take loans from different sources to maintain my family expenditure. I was in a desperate situation and did attempt suicide once. Finally I made up my mind to move to India to earn and to help my family members. In 2009 I migrated to Mumbai with the help of a broker. A number of people from Satkhira migrated to Mumbai who helped me to settle down in Mumbai. I started working as a domestic helper for 6 families. Additionally, I also worked as a cook in one of the rich person's house where I had to cook for 20 people. For me the money was very significant. I used to earn about 20,000 BDT ($170) per month and contributed to my family.

Over the last four years I have invested money to set up a poultry farm in Bangladesh. My father is looking after this farm and getting an average 50000 BDT ($427) profit yearly. Two of my sons are engaged with fish business. Both of my sons leased out 198 decimal lands for fishing. I have provided 120000 BDT ($1025) to my elder son to purchase a motorbike and spent 35000 BDT ($299) to buy a boat for my 2nd son which he is using for fishing in the river. I also bought a television for my family members. Now I am planning to purchase a refrigerator. I also have a bank account where I am saving some money.

I have benefited from EMPHASIS project. Once I was suffering from fever, at that time the people in the community started spreading a rumor about me and said that I must be having HIV as I was working in Mumbai. One outreach worker from EMPHASIS project took me to Satkhira to visit a doctor and after tests, I diagnosed with typhoid and malaria. After taking medicine I am cured. Nowadays I am happy with my 2 sons and my parents. Migration contributed to regain my happiness and a stable life with my family members.
Living With Dignity

Khushi Rai is a 30-year old woman who lives with her husband and their baby boy in Sarhaul Gaon – a slum in Delhi, which attracts hundreds of migrants from within and outside the country, who work as skilled or unskilled labor in the surrounding industries.

Back home in Nepal, Khushi’s family lived in abject poverty and could barely afford two square meals a day. Even as a little girl, she had to shoulder the responsibility of looking after her younger siblings while her parents were away at work. Her dream of becoming a nurse remained unfulfilled, as she never got a chance to attend school. Married off at the tender age of 15, Khushi accompanied her husband to Mumbai, where he worked as a driver. She had a baby and started working in a garment factory to supplement the family’s income, but her husband ill-treated her and squandered her earnings on alcohol and other women. She returned to Nepal and divorced her husband, who later forcibly took their child away from her. Sorely depressed, Khushi decided to join her father in Delhi and find a job for herself in order to forget the past and start life afresh. She gradually fell in love with a young man and married him. Soon she was blessed with a son, but struggled to make ends meet as her husband only had a temporary job and she was unemployed.

It was under such difficult circumstances that Khushi got to know about the EMPHASIS project being implemented by CARE in their area. She started spending her free time at the Drop-in Centre, where she had the opportunity to interact with fellow Nepali migrants, watch TV and gather valuable information about HIV and AIDS and safe mobility. Meanwhile, a 3-day vocational training program was conducted for women in Sarhaul, as a part of the EMPHASIS project, wherein they learnt how to make several eco-friendly utility items, using newspapers as raw material. Khushi enrolled herself for the training program and participated enthusiastically. In the practical test held in the last session, she prepared a mat and a bowl which were appreciated by one and all. With encouragement from the EMPHASIS team which helped her polish her skills further, Khushi has now taken up the vocation as a part-time business. She is known in her neighborhood for her hand-made table mats, pen stands, bowls etc, which she makes on order and sells locally. She has also received training on functional literacy and signs her name instead of putting her thumb impression on documents.

Today, Khushi is an empowered woman. She says with a smile, “I am immensely grateful to EMPHASIS for having equipped me with the skills that have made me self-sufficient. I am now confident of providing a secured childhood and a bright future for my son”

Service Linkage Across Border Provides New Hope

Tara, a migrant from Duni VDC in Nepal went to India, seeking employment, like so many people from the district of Accham. He started his life in India working as a daily wage labor in Mumbai and in due course of time got married. Tara says “I was 20 years old when I got married and took my wife with me”. Expecting to create a better future for his family Tara continued his hardship far from his home with his mate. Then gradually after few years later his wife began to struggle with her health suffering from continuous illness and fever. Incourse of the treatment, Tara spent all his income that he had managed from his work, but the situation did not imporve. One day when Tara took his wife for delivery of his baby to one of the health centre in Mumbai, he was informed that his wife was infected with HIV who died few days later after giving birth. Tara had an ICTC report of himself and his 2 months daughter which stated both were HIV positive. Tara lost his job and had no option but to return home. He was planning to return home when he came in contact with Prakash Pariyar an outreach worker working under EMPHASIS project in Mumbai. With support delivered from Prakash, Tara was referred for cross border service linkage to GaRDeF Nepal in Achham. On July 14, 2013 approximately after 20 days meeting with project staff in India he came in contact to Mr. Gyanendra Kunwar an outreach worker working in EMPHASIS project in Achham. Both Tara and his daughter accessed CD4 service from District Hospital Mangalsen on July 20 and were registered at Bayalpata Hospital for ART.

Tara says “Due to lack of awareness and information I lost my wife but now I have been provided with new hope for making life of mine and my daughter better. I wouldn’t have made this effort alone if I was not supported by project”. Tara has decided to spend rest of his life in Achham by doing some Income Generating activity. The community support group at Duni is supporting him in his new phase of life
Migrant Help Desk at Indo-Nepal Transit

The EMPHASIS project in Nepal is partnering with the Nepal police and border stakeholders to establish citizen help desks to create supportive environment to the migrants. The citizen help desk has been established at both the transit points (Mahendranagar and Dhangadi) for promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of migrants. There are four police officials assigned to operate this help desk who receive complains from migrants and provide support. The help desk keeps records of harassment and violence faced by migrants, and takes action related to the security and dignity of the migrants. Though the initiative was initiated by EMPHASIS, the Regional Police Head and the District Administration have committed to continue the help desk even beyond EMPHASIS. The stakeholders suggest this kind of practice can be replicated in all border areas for the safety and dignity of migrants.

EMPHASIS Strengthens Emergency Response at Transit Points

On 28th of September 2013, at 10.30 am a phone call from Banbasa Police came to BGSVS staff and they informed us that a Nepali person has been found unconscious near Chuna Bhatt Forest at Banbasa. EMPHASIS staff and local authorities arranged for ambulance and rushed the person to the local health centre for treatment.

After being conscious, he (Kali Bahadur Sahi) shared the story of how he along with his son was poisoned by a fellow Nepali while taking the forest route to the border. He worked at Uttarakhand and lost all the money that he was carrying back. He also noticed that his son was missing, who was also travelling with him. Subsequently, he was linked with the EMPHASIS team on the Nepal side of the border, and they supported him to reach home safely. The EMPHASIS team informed him about the dangers and consequences of carrying money and alternative ways of transferring money through banks. After he reached Nepal, he was relieved to find that someone had helped his son to cross over and that he had already reached home.

In another instance, while on his regular rounds, Dhruw Singh, an Outreach Worker with EMPHASIS saw a person lying on the road side. On reaching the spot, he realized that the person was in a semi conscious condition and could only recall the fact that he belonged to Nepal and a fellow passenger had drugged and robbed him. The ORW promptly informed the Police about the case and called the ambulance. Within half an hour, the boy was admitted to the Government hospital at Paliya for treatment. After being conscious next day, the boy (Karn Kuwar) talked about how he was robbed of INR 45,000 he was carrying back to buy land at his village. The EMPHASIS team provided him with emergency monetary support for the bus fare back home, from the Akshay Patra, a donation box kept in the EMPHASIS DIC. The boy was also sensitized about safe mobility and remittance through formal channels.
In General, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) is a bilateral or multilateral agreement between two or more parties. It expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action. Linkages with multiple stakeholders with the objective of improving access of migrants to various services or facilities have been an effective strategy in EMPHASIS. Over the last four and half years, EMPHASIS has shown evidence of successful linkages with both government and private service providers for quality and migrant friendly services for reducing vulnerability of migrants and to ensure access to health and non-health services. Over the project period, stakeholders have realised the need and their responsibility for providing services to migrants and their families, so much so that they are willing to commit to continue providing services to migrants and their families even after the planned closure of the project. MoUs were signed with EMPHASIS in order to formalise this commitment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Stakeholders</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Departments (Transport depts. / Hospitals)</td>
<td>Transit (India)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Source (Bangladesh)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Source (Nepal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Sector (Trade Unions/ Banks)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source (Bangladesh)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source (Nepal)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
<td>Destination (India)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source (Nepal)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>People With HIV Networks</td>
<td>Destination (India)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source (Bangladesh)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Source (Nepal)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Organizations (Associations / Radio channels)</td>
<td>Source (Nepal)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>32</td>
</tr>
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Regional Consultation on Migration and Development

Given the growing relevance of migration in the development agenda CARE EMPHASIS organized a two days Regional Consultation on Migration and Development on 30-31st of July, 2013 in New Delhi, India. A diverse range of speakers and stakeholders from governments, UN agencies, civil society, universities, research institutions, policy makers, media, I/NGOs and networks participated in the event. The event was observed as an opportunity to bring together diverse perspectives and experiences around migration discourse in South Asia.

Key messages from the consultation:
1. Migration of people across international borders affects economic growth and social welfare in both sending and receiving countries. Despite this, migration has been largely absent from the development discourse. There is an urgent need to promote a more informed and committed dialogue about migration and development.
2. There is need for robust data to inform targeted programming and advocacy. This includes data not only about which populations are ‘at risk’ or ‘high risk’ but also which provinces and states at source and destination have the highest HIV prevalence.
3. In terms of Governance, there was a strong push to focus on the social cost of migration and for states to formulate strong policies and systems of social protection that address migrants and their families. States must deal with internal, external and inward migration (from neighbouring countries).
4. Migration is fraught with risk. Migrants are subject to exploitation (e.g. abuse and fraud in the recruitment-process, poor working conditions and low pay; discrimination; the psychosocial stress that arises from being dislocated from family and familiar rituals; and vulnerability to HIV. Women migrants are particularly vulnerable to these factors. The notion of ‘protecting women’ by restricting their right to mobility and safe work is unhelpful and perpetuates patriarchal norms and attitudes.
5. Remittances: There is a need to provide greater access to banks and better financial innovation for migrants.
6. EMPHASIS began primarily as an HIV and AIDS project, focusing on migrants who leave their homes to seek work in India. EMPHASIS has demonstrated that it is possible to establish a responsive chain of partnerships along migration corridors; to provide HIV and other services for cross border migrants throughout the mobility continuum; and to do this in ways that empower women and girls and facilitate cross border referrals.

Indo-Nepal Journalists Forum for Safer Mobility

The EMPHASIS project is engaging with the media at all levels to raise the issue of migrants and HIV and AIDS to create the supportive environment through the advocacy. Media engagement and mobilization is one of the ways in which an enabling environment is created.

On 6 October 2013, an Indo-Nepal journalists meeting was held which included representatives from national media at the transit sides of both the countries. This was an initiation for journalists from India and Nepal in coordination with the Indo-Nepal Journalist Forum which focussed on issues of safe mobility. Thirty journalists from India and Nepal participated in this event. In the meeting, the DIG committed that his team will support any effort that reduces harassment and violence against migrants at transit and will include journalists in this effort.
Following were the outcomes of the meeting:

- Formation of Indo Nepal Journalists Federation and facilitation for registration processes.
- Commitment from journalists from both countries to address cross border issues such as violence, harassment, trafficking, drug abuse and many other crimes.
- Highlighted roles of media on sensitization of borders issues and joint actions needed to address on human rights issues and challenges.
- Establishment of an information board with the support of the EMPHASIS project with major messages on safe mobility and contact details of media focal person at transit in both the countries. The information board shall be kept at both the sides of the Indo-Nepal Border.
- Major issues will be taken up by the journalists to the higher officials, in case there is a need.
- Commitment to continuation of this initiation and decided that the next meeting would be held in Paliya, India.

EMPHASIS has initiated the Indo-Nepal Journalists Meeting at transit which aims to build a collaborative working strategy for safe mobility. The project is engaging media as a public private partnership strategy which has already achieved significant results on safety and dignity of migrant population at the transit. Now, the formation of Indo-Nepal Journalists Federation has provided a forum where issues related to the migrants are discussed and highlighted in general as well as advocated with stakeholders to ensure a safe migration process.

Indian Parliamentarians Meet on the Issues of Labor Migrants

A consultation with selected Members of Parliament in India was organized to raise the issue of migrants’ vulnerabilities including gaps in the policy framework. The Day long deliberation was organized by Women Power Connect, (WPC is the Strategic Advocacy Partner for EMPHASIS) and included discussions with different stakeholders on migration and the challenges around accessing migrant rights, and existing laws, policies and schemes for migrant workers. Shri Oscar Fernandes, Minister, Government of India; Shri Bhakta Charan Das, M.P; and Shri Baishnab Parida, M.P attended the meet. The session was moderated by Dr. Ranjana Kumari, prominent social activist and Director of Centre for Social Research.

Discussions with migrant representatives in India, key stakeholders including Government representatives, ILO, civil society representatives, trade unions and unorganized and domestic workers federations enriched the discussions and provided useful and concrete policy recommendations for the MPs. The meeting with Parliamentarian’s began with a presentation by Nabesh Bohidar from EMPHASIS highlighting the key vulnerabilities of migrant populations and solutions from the ground as well as policy and legal gaps in the migration framework. Some of the key recommendations put forward included provision of ID cards and health insurance schemes for migrant workers. The MPs acknowledged the relevance of the issues and recommendations presented.

EMPHASIS-Raising Migrants’ Concerns at the 11th International AIDS Congress in Asia and the Pacific (ICAAP)

The EMPHASIS project participated in the recently held ICAAP - 11, at Bangkok, Thailand. The ICAAP is the largest forum on HIV and AIDS held in the region. For over 20 years, ICAAP has played a key role in raising public awareness, building political commitment, strengthening advocacy networks, and disseminating knowledge on HIV and AIDS issues among key affected populations and other stakeholders in the region. The EMPHASIS team used it as a platform to highlight the issues of the migrants as well as disseminated the learning to the larger development community. EMPHASIS also organized a satellite session on Sharing EMPHASIS learning along with a focused discussion on migration and development. Senior representatives from UNICEF, UNAIDS, PPD, ICDDR,B, IOM were the key speaker of the session. Similarly, in other events, EMPHASIS team also shared their series of learning as listed in next page:
List of papers presented at ICAAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Lead Author</th>
<th>Format</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Critical role of spouse groups in preventing new HIV infections among migrants in Nepal</td>
<td>Prakash Pandey</td>
<td>Oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Key Interventions and Learning in EMPHASIS</td>
<td>Tahseen Alam</td>
<td>Oral</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Establishing cross-border service linkage in South Asia</td>
<td>Nabesh Bohidar</td>
<td>Oral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Identifying and raising advocacy issues to women led task force in Nepal</td>
<td>Upasana Shakya</td>
<td>e-poster</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 HIV prevention program reaching Nepalese migrants and their spouses both at source and destinations</td>
<td>Umesh Gahatraj</td>
<td>e-poster</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Linking Source and Destination through mapping, listing and validation in cross-border interventions</td>
<td>Nabesh Bohidar</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Linkages of Cross border Migrants to HIV &amp; Non HIV related services in Delhi</td>
<td>Mamt Behera</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Mobile DIC- an innovative strategy for reaching to ‘hard to reach’ Migrants</td>
<td>Mamt Behera</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 HIV intervention at Indo Nepal Border-Banbasa... it Works!</td>
<td>Rokaiya Parween</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Transit-based HIV prevention program reach migrants and their spouses going to India from Nepal</td>
<td>Prakash Pandey</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Transport workers and hoteliers contributed to prevent HIV transmission among migrants at Indo-Nepal border</td>
<td>Prakash Chandra Madai, NEEDS Kanchanpur</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Condom promotion to behavior change through community mobilization is effective</td>
<td>Md. Hafijul Islam</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Voluntary Counseling and Testing: A strategy to ensure HIV prevention for cross border migrants</td>
<td>Prokriti Nokrek</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Challenges for accessing and staying on treatment for cross border migrants living with HIV</td>
<td>Mirza Manbira Sultana</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Health System Strengthening - A synergetic effect on HIV Prevention</td>
<td>Dr. Sanjida Alam</td>
<td>e-poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Migrant people with HIV from Nepal and Bangladesh and working in India successfully get ART</td>
<td>Sandeep Dashrath Gaikwad</td>
<td>e-poster</td>
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EMPHASIS Observed World AIDS Day 2013

The EMPHASIS team organized a number of events at the intervention sites across the region to observe the World AIDS Day on the 1st of December 2013.

An infotainment program, which witnessed the participation of over 750 people, was held at Andheri (Mumbai), a commercial hub that houses a large number of single male migrants from Nepal. The event was preceded by a short rally from the Andheri Police Station to the program venue, wherein the participants used posters and placards bearing slogans to raise awareness on HIV and WAD.

A “Rickshaw and Tanga” rally, comprising of a total of 66 rickshaws and one tanga (horse cart) was organized from Sharda Barrage to Banbasa, wherein the procession raised slogans such as “AIDS ki Jankari hee Bachao Hai” (Awareness is the best way of preventing the spread of HIV and AIDS) using placards and banners.

Another rally was organized from the BSF outpost in Petrapole to the Indo-Bangladesh border and back, in collaboration with NACO’s Truckers’ Targeted Intervention, in which the Assistant Commissioner of Customs, ACHOM of Bongaon, OC of the Bongaon Police Station, participated. A street drama and magic show were organized and a signature campaign was also initiated to garner support for people living with HIV.

An EMPHASIS information kiosk and poster exhibition set up at Naraina (Delhi), to sensitize the impact population about HIV and AIDS, STIs and safe mobility, attracted a participation of about 150 people. A quiz competition was also conducted.
EMPHASIS Partner Addresses 7th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive, Sexual Health and Rights

Shankar Talwar, Action Research Center, Mumbai presented learning and solutions from EMPHASIS at the session on “Ensuring SRHR of migrant workers” in a Asia regional event organized in Philippines in January 2014. This session showcased the results of several intervention projects aimed at meeting the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of migrant workers in India, Hong Kong and Thailand. Dr. Shankar Talwar shared his group’s experiences in implementing a project to address HIV risk and vulnerabilities among Nepali and Bangladeshi migrant workers in Mumbai, the commercial and industrial hub of India. The program focused on social behavioral change communication, women empowerment, referral to health services, capacity building, and continuum of prevention to care. Meanwhile, Ms. Teresita Elegado related the challenges and lessons learned in implementing the RHAPSODY, a two-country approach project that not only provided SRH services to migrant workers in Hong Kong, but also of their families left behind in the Philippines. Finally, Ms. Rattanaporn Poungpattana presented the SRHR and situation of migrant workers from Mekong countries and the responses of Raks Thai Foundation, a Thai non-government organization.

Reflections from EMPHASIS Implementing Partners

I feel honored to write a few words on partnering with EMPHASIS. In reality, there is lot to share about our experience of working in the field for the last 5 years. Initially we faced many challenges when we started to implement the project. The Landlords did not give us space to set up our DIC. The house owners strictly warned outreach staff not to enter to their premises; the local police were picking up our field staff for questioning without any reason, and in many cases the Impact Population were not receptive to the information on HIV and safe mobility. Based on our combined efforts, the stakeholders and Impact population now own the project as well as the issue of HIV and safe migration. I would like to highlight few points which I feel are the most crucial achievements the project has brought over the period.

- One of the major achievements is the development of cross border referral/network. Migrants living with HIV and who are in need of treatment can access ARV services without discontinuation of treatment and harassment now.
- Women are more empowered and informed in terms of knowledge on HIV, condom negotiation with partners, sharing with peer group etc. Also there are willingness to form formal groups for livelihood, vocational skills and recreational activities.
- Strong ownership among Nepali migrants has helped to form youth groups, Nepali Sangh for the support of needy new migrants, and to continue activities (such as DIC, referrals, community events) initiated by EMPHASIS.
- Build a cadre of stakeholders among Nepali migrant and we hope, the services will continue and project can be sustainable.
- Support and mentoring from CARE team and a strong relationship among implementing partners have also been a great learning.
- Facilitation of safe money transfer of migrants and reducing incidences of violence has been a major achievement through advocacy.
Rights Jessore started implementing different projects in this area to improve the vulnerable health situation of migrants. We started implementing the Enhance Mobile Population’s Access to HIV & AIDS Services, Information and Support (EMPHASIS) project on June-2010 in Satkhira District with three Upazillas. Earlier, Rights Jessore had implemented several projects in these areas and thus we had good linkage with the community. Our knowledge on migration and HIV and AIDS in cross border area has been enriched and the organizational profile has also gone up. We have also experimented and learnt new ways of working with migrants and cross-border interventions.

In our country the access to HIV and AIDS information and service is comparatively limited. Through the project, we have worked towards reducing the migrant’s vulnerability to HIV. It has been a valuable experience for Rights Jessore to work on Migration & HIV.

Rights Jessore is happy to provide STI services for the cross border community/village people along with the support from EMPHASIS. Rights Jessore is proud of implementing the VCT successfully, in collaboration with the government and hope to its continuation. Rights Jessore believes that community participation is must to eradicate the misconception on HIV and AIDS and we have made that happen through EMPHASIS.

EMPHASIS is a project focused on mobile/migrant population. During its last four years of work the project has benefitted more than 8000 direct beneficiaries through access to services or referral and facilitation covering an overall beneficiary list of around twenty thousand migrants. Our efforts have been enriched and empowered by technical support and valuable guidance from Care India throughout the project. Cross project visits to Mumbai, Calcutta, Bangladesh and Nepal also have been great learning experiences.

Some of our key achievements are: better and more enabling environment for the migrants across the mobility continuum, including safety during transit, setting comparatively stable employment, improvements in living conditions, empowering and organizing migrants networks for their rights, facilitation and support in getting better access to police services and protection, admission in schools for migrants children, getting mobile SIMs for easy communication and availing health facilities.

Formation of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) proved to be instrumental in developing and enhancing the access to services and resilience of the Impact Population during the project. Tremendous support and cooperation from the demand side boosted morale and motivation to work with more enthusiasm. Although we faced problems working with the Bangla speaking migrants, due to various reasons, the overall experience has been generously satisfying. It was an innovation and completely new area of work for us, and we can proudly say that we have been able to achieve our objectives and reach out to the community effectively.

For the sustainability of the program, some community lead initiatives are in the process to be handed over to the CBO and TI Network for further facilitation and support. It has been a fulfilling journey till here and we wish our best for the betterment and growth of the Impact Population in future.
From August 2012, NEEDS Nepal was selected as an implementing partner of EMPHASIS project for Kanchanpur and Kailali districts. Health and HIV and AIDS is a crosscutting theme of NEEDS Nepal and EMPHASIS provided a platform. NEEDS has long been working experience in community in different social issues. So NEEDS expressed interest to work with CARE Nepal through this project with migrants, spouses and PWHIVs for protecting and promoting rights of migrants and increasing access to treatment, care and support to HIV positive and safe mobility to mobile populations in source and transit.

NEEDS has taken this project as an opportunity to build linkages between and among people within three neighboring nations Nepal, India and Bangladesh. Being one of NGOs of this region, NEEDS is glad to work in many integrated issues of migrants, spouses and PWHIV through different initiative such as women empowerment, economic empowerment, protecting rights of migrants and raising issues of impact population in partnership with local level stakeholders, district authorities, media and different private actors.

Through EMPHASIS we have been able to promote a mechanism of using financial institution like banks and IME to channelize the flow of remittance from destination to source by empowering spouses of migrants at source community and coordinating with cross-country partners for ensuring that migrants use formal mechanisms. There are currently 21 spouse groups being mobilized as effective intervention models in Achham and Kanchanpur district of Nepal.

This project has been able to develop new alliance and make an enabling environment in community to work further through networks of spouses groups, community support groups and migrants network too. The organization foresees this initiative a beginning of new era to proceed its work further in sector of migration, HIV & women empowerment for enhancing the quality of life.

With the span of more than four years, EMPHASIS Project has been an innovative effort and experience of learning for GaRDeF Nepal. The approach of working in issues of migrant population integrating aspect of prevention, promotion and curative with continuum of service from source, transit and destination has created an enabling environment for non government organizations to expand their service beyond the borders. It is fact that with every phase of this regional initiative, the level of partnership has uplifted and created better opportunity for our organization to work with community level stakeholders like Transport Unions, Hoteliers groups, private hospital and Banks.

It is remarkable that the project has been able to provide a new platform to the community to address issues of safe mobility through empowerment of women. It has also designed a framework to advocate for the issues of safe mobility and HIV through networks and community groups involving the Impact Population. It is a fact that EMPHASIS has demonstrated a comprehensive practice model which has helped our organization to achieve its goal and develop a strong chain of partnership among three nations.
Ad-din, a non-profit private voluntary organization operates in Bangladesh since 1980. Ad-din aims to improve the health, educational, social and financial status of underprivileged people, particularly of women and children.

The EMPHASIS project has been working very closely with the government health settings and has been receiving remarkable support from the district health department to implement its activities. The project has established referral linkages with the existing government and non-government service providers.

Ad-din through EMPHASIS project has taken the lead role among the NGOs working on the HIV and AIDS and migration in Jessore district in terms of maintaining GO-NGO coordination and functionalizing District AIDS committee. With the establishment of Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) centre in the district general hospital, the project will substantially contribute in reducing HIV prevalence among the project impact groups and general people of the district. Depending on EMPHASIS learning Ad-din feels the need to advocate for having the STI services in rural Community Clinics (CCs) and union Family Welfare Centres (FWVs), especially in cross border districts in Bangladesh.

BGSVS got an opportunity to get associated with CARE Emphasis project at transit point Banbasa & Gaurifanta. At the Indo Nepal border-Banbasa, the work has been started in May 2010 among those coming from Nepal to India with the objective to reduce HIV and AIDS vulnerability. In December 2010, the organization was given responsibility to cover Gaurifanta transit along with Banbasa. In order to make the program implementation successful, CARE has provided regular support to the organization. CARE has supported BGSVS by linking us with various Government & non Government agencies for making the program sustainable. Based on our efforts on the ground, in the border areas the Rickshaw Union, Police, SSB, Hoteliers, etc are making a coordinated effort to reduce the vulnerability of migrants on HIV and ensure safe mobility. The outcome of this is visible as the number of cases of harassment and poisoning is reduced and awareness for HIV and AIDS has increased. To establish and strengthen gender balance & gender sensitive system, CARE’s support was incredible. CARE has supported the organization in highlighting our joint innovations at national & International level. BGSVS has learnt a lot in reporting and documentations from CARE. CARE has played vital role in strengthening the organization internal system for which BGSVS is grateful to EMPHASIS.

Implementing Partner
Ad-din reminisces…
Md. Rabiul Haque,
Ad-din, Jessore,
Bangladesh

Partnership with
EMPHASIS...
Sanjai Awasthi, Bharatiya
Gram Utthan Seva Vikas
Sansthan, Indo-Nepal
Border, India

Women group discussing safe mobility
Migrants at destination read about moving safe
Contact details:

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The EMPHASIS project is a five year project, implemented by CARE and supported by the BIG Lottery Fund, UK. The project works in three countries - India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

The views expressed by the authors in the newsletters are personal and may not be the official position of CARE. The names of some impact population in the newsletter are changed to protect their identity.