

Migration for Development in China: A Perspective from Sending Regions

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Rationale

China is undergoing a huge economic transformation, with production and employment shifting from agriculture to manufacturing and service industries. Labour mobility and internal migration of approximately 120 to 150 million workers from the countryside to the cities is at the heart of this process and has contributed to the high rate of economic growth. Migration is an issue of critical concern to policy makers in China today. Most attention is focussed on the migrants themselves, in particular addressing their need for improved social protection and working conditions, as well as their integration in the cities of destination.

Less attention has been given so far to those left behind, mainly the young and elderly people, certain ethnic groups and minorities, and more generally to the social and economic conditions of the migrant sending regions. A huge outflow of young and healthy workers will have a huge impact on the people left behind and the economy of migrants sending regions, most notably labour markets and social protection.

Objectives and key questions:

This project will focus on the implication of migration for sending regions. Key questions to be addressed are:

- 1) What can we learn from the experience in OECD and non-OECD countries with respect to migration and return migration? What are good practices that are relevant for China?
- 2) What are the current trends and patterns of internal migration in China: Who migrates, for how long, what is the size of return migration?
- 3) What is the impact of internal migration on labor markets and social protection of those left behind?
- 4) What is the size and effects of remittances – how are they currently used and what is their impact?
- 5) What are the existing policy responses to the phenomenon of internal migration and how can policies be improved?
- 6) In the domain of migration, employment and social protection, what changes in institutional set-ups would promote a more harmonious society in China?

Preliminary outline

Executive summary

Introduction, objectives and key questions

Part I: Migration and return migration – what do we know from other countries' experience?

- 1) OECD country experience
- 2) Non-OECD country experience
- 3) Lessons learnt and good practices

Part II: What is the impact of migration on sending regions in China?

- 4) Data, methodology and questionnaire
- 5) Current trends and patterns of internal and return migration
- 6) Social impact of migration and vulnerability (elderly, children and women)
- 7) Impact of migration on labour markets (labour markets structure, employment creation, wages)
- 8) Role and use of remittances

Part III: Policy challenges and recommendations

- 9) Migration, employment and social protection policies (housing, fiscal, training, skills)
- 10) Institutional set-up

Conclusions