Background Paper

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Roundtable 3 - Managing Migration and Perceptions of Migration for Development Outcomes

RT 3.1: Improving Public Perceptions of Migrants and Migration: challenging preconceptions and shaping perceptions

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This paper draws upon IOM's World Migration Report 2011 'Communicating Effectively about Migration'.[1] It was drafted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with input provided by the RT 3.1 co-chairs, governments, and other team members and the RT 3 Coordinator Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie. The aim of the paper is to inform and facilitate the discussion of Roundtable session 3.1 during the Mauritian GFMD summit meeting in November 2012. It is not exhaustive in its treatment of the 3.1 session theme and does not necessarily reflect the views of the GFMD organizers or the governments involved in the GFMD process.

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[1] For further information, please see
http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=37&products_id=752

Introduction

Migration looms very large as a topic of community interest, of media preoccupation and of political controversy. Despite its unavoidable presence however, the public discourse on migration is often unfocused and lacking in definition. Moreover, community perceptions of migrants and migration can be equally blurred and confused.

Large scale surveys of attitudes to migration regularly tap into substantial pools of community scepticism about the value of migration. For instance, the most recent (2012) Global Poll by the Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute conducted in 24 countries worldwide shows that in all regions except Latin America, a majority of those interviewed felt that immigration had had a negative impact on their countries. This is broadly consistent with the findings of Pew Global Attitudes Surveys conducted in 2002 and 2007. These attitudes are often strongly coloured by negative perceptions of the nature of migratory processes and of migrants themselves.

Yet public perceptions of migration are never as clear cut as they may appear at first glance. For one thing, it is unsafe to assume that there is such a thing as unified public opinion – in the singular – on migration. Instead, one is confronted with public opinions – in the plural – on almost every aspect of migration. There are differences across regions, between countries and within countries. Hurrell (2010) points out, for instance, that in the UK the feeling that migration numbers are "too high" has been a constant since the 1960s, irrespective of the actual numbers of migrants coming in. In Canada, on the other hand, there is a consistently high level of support for immigration, diversity and minority rights (Soroka and Roberton, 2010) and MIPEX.

In broad terms, attitude surveys address three issues of public interest: economic issues, security issues and socio-cultural issues. Rational public debate of all three is highly desirable. Citrin and Sides (2008) point out that what often happens instead is that the discourse on migration policy falls into a "populism trap" where core issues become lost in the midst of misperceptions and misinformation.

In addition to deeper rooted causes such as direct or indirect discrimination and racism, negative and contradictory perceptions about migration fuelled by incorrect or incomplete information are at the root of many problems:

- They result in unfounded controversy about the nature and impact of migration;

- They engender harmful stereotypes, discrimination and anti-migrant sentiment, which can lead to violence and human rights abuse against migrants as well as social disharmony; and consequently,

- They stand in the way of effective policy-making which may ultimately hinder the development potential of migration.

In light of these considerations, this paper has a threefold purpose and structure:

- To discuss, with the help of available research evidence, how perceptions of migration and migrants are shaped;

- To map out the critical roles that different actors - government officials, the media, employers and civil society, including the migrants themselves – play in shaping those perceptions; and

- To explore and review the approaches different GFMD participating states and other relevant actors have taken to counter or challenge negative perceptions and to foster positive perceptions and attitudes towards migrants, migration, and thus contribute to social harmony in the midst of diversity.

In doing so, this paper aims to set the scene for further discussion by considering the issue of perceptions from varying contexts, including South-South migration, emigration and return migration as well as the role of different actors namely government, media, employers, civil society and the migrants themselves. However, it is important to note that the bulk of research work on perceptions of migrants and migration has been done in industrialized countries. Much less research on this topic has been conducted in developing countries. This paper will nonetheless attempt to highlight the evidence available from these countries and it calls for further research and analysis from their perspective. Furthermore, it is emphasized that although the research in this area often deals with perceptions, attitudes and behaviours in combination, and it is recognized that the three of them are unavoidably interlinked, the focus of this paper is primarily on the first of these concepts.

Some key determinants of perceptions about migrants and migration

There is no single factor, taken in isolation, which can be said to be responsible for the shaping of perceptions about migrants (including emigrants and return migrants) and migration. Research evidence points instead to a complex interplay between many variables.

It should be pointed out from the outset that there are no universally agreed meanings governing the use of the terms "migration" and "migrant"[2]. In all countries of destination, whether developed or developing, there are many different types of migrants and perceptions are commonly influenced by the particular "person-images" evoked by those terms. In the popular view, the label "migrant" can be just as easily be applied to asylum seekers, refugees, students or tourists as to labour migrants, seasonal workers, or persons reuniting with family members. For this reason, no single definition of "migrant" or "migration" is given is this paper, to enable adequate exploration of the many ways in which these concepts are perceived.

Opinion is further influenced by the formal immigration status of those who move – that is, whether they are regular or irregular migrants, or the perception thereof. According to the OECD (2010), public opinion is generally more favourable towards refugees than other migrants. However, this must be balanced against the fact that residents of countries accepting large numbers of refugees are more worried about the consequences of migration than other countries.

Numbers matter: actual or perceived numbers of migrants in the community or actual or perceived increases in migration flows often have a negative impact on public opinion, especially when these numbers are deemed to exceed a notional and variable "acceptable level" or absorption capacity (OECD 2010, Transatlantic Trends 2010, Pew Research Center 2007).

- But there is common tendency to over-estimate either the absolute number of migrants in a given country, in particular those in an irregular situation, or the proportion of the population that migrants represent.

- Research findings also show that when respondents are provided with accurate information about migrants or migration rather than being asked if they think there are "too many migrants", their responses tend to be more favourable suggesting that there is a lack of adequate communication about available data in addition to an actual dearth of data itself especially on irregular migrants.

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[2] For the purpose of this paper, no single definition of migrants has been put forth in order to demonstrate how varying definitions are and how these link to perceptions. At the international level, no universally accepted definition of migrant exists. According to the recommended UN definition, a long-term migrant is a person who moves to a country other than his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year and a short-term migrant is a person who moves for at least three months but less than a year. Yet this definition is not easily applicable to all country contexts.

Context matters: perceptions of migration and migrants are shaped by historical, socio-cultural and political factors.

- Public opinion polls and research also indicate that while some societies debate the economic merits and challenges of migration, others are concerned about the socio-cultural integration of migrants and migrant communities (e.g. German Marshall Fund 2011 survey, Focus Canada 2010 survey).

- Media reports focused on migrants and their communities, tensions related to the accommodation of religious values and practices, and questions of national identity and heritage can also have an impact on perceptions.

Public opinion about migration can be volatile and sensitive to a whole range of externalities. Attitudes towards migration are strongly influenced by economic circumstances and, in particular, the availability of jobs. In times of economic downturn, migration is often is put forward as a convenient and unjustified catch-all explanation for deeply-seated structural problems such as unemployment, social insecurity or lack of affordable accommodation.

The "politicization" of migration affects attitudes to migration. Migration is, without doubt, a topic of great political moment, in the sense that it is, in most countries, a matter of keen interest to the broad polity but equally that is a governance issue that is hotly debated among political parties. This is unlikely to change, but problems do arise when the debate is based on impressions not related to a firm evidence base and when conversation is surrounded by unnecessary emotional "noise". This is the process that Hurrell (2010) describes as "politicization" when "an issue increases in salience...rises up the political agenda and involves…elements of conflict, including party political conflict and competition." In such circumstances, as in periods of economic crisis, it is all too easy for migration to become burdened with connotations of discomfort and distress while the positive socio-economic and cultural contributions migrants actually make to both their host and home countries (for instance, through remittances or knowledge networks) are conveniently overlooked. For migration and perceptions of migration to be the subject of constructive debate, it is necessary to create "political space" for rational analysis of the key issues, concerns and interests.

Legislative and policy approaches to migration, and integration of migrants, can play a role in influencing public perceptions. Whereas some States restrict the full participation of migrants whether economically, politically or socially, others have recognized the importance participation (in some cases regardless of legal status or length of stay) in order to avoid marginalization in society. Broader approaches aimed at ensuring respect for the human rights of migrants may also have an impact on perceptions. This is an area where more research is desirable.

Age, socio-economic background, ethnicity, geographic location and education levels of respondents strongly influence the outcomes of migration-related surveys: all of these variables can interact in complex and unpredictable ways. There are, however, consistent patterns of evidence suggesting that attitudes to migrants correlate significantly with age, educational attainment and possession of professional skills (European Commission, 2006 and Kleemans and Klugman, 2009). In broad terms, younger and highly educated persons are more likely to have positive views of migrants than their older and less educated counterparts, and skilled individuals feel less threatened by migrants than their unskilled counterparts. Gender appears to less significantly influence perceptions and opinions. The exposure to migration and diverse populations is also an important factor of how migrants are perceived. Those who interact more often with migrants in the workplace, schools and multicultural communities by and large, tend to be more accepting of diversity and have positive perceptions and attitudes towards migrants and migration. Such patterns are noted in in both North-South and South-South migration contexts (see for example ILO, 2010).

Emigration also shapes a country of origin's perceptions of its nationals abroad though unlike immigration, relatively little empirical evidence exists. A Pew Global Attitudes survey conducted in

44 countries found that a significant portion, particular in Latin America, found emigration to be a "very big" problem. Yet the way emigrants are perceived by the wider public or by State policy can vary from national hero status (i.e., the Philippines) to one of home country abandonment. Perceptions tend to be further shaped by length of time abroad, impact of migration on the family/community in the country of origin and the economic situation of the home country. For example, in northern Ghana perceptions of migration are largely influenced by whether the process is seasonal/temporary or longer-term/permanent with the former looked upon more favourably, in particular in periods of food insecurity (van der Geest, 2010).

Return migration, is perhaps one of the aspects of the migration life cycle that has received least attention until recently. Yet upon return, returnees also face the reality of perceptions formed about them while abroad. Assessments of return are mixed and range significantly from positive perceptions of those who seem to have attained financial success or status abroad to those who have returned after unsuccessful attempts at gaining employment abroad. Furthermore ambivalence toward return can result from not meeting a family or community's economic expectation of the migrant abroad, or even suspicion of their activities while abroad. Such prevailing perceptions can make the re-integration experience a difficult one. For example, a community study in Viet Nam focused on returning victims of trafficking found that the sense of shame or stigma associated with victims among their families or communities was largely fuelled by a misunderstanding of human trafficking (Yen, et al., 2010).

Finally, *the time factor needs to be considered*. Perceptions about migration and migrants are not impervious change. On the contrary, they can and do evolve over time in both positive and negative directions. For policy makers, this suggests that programmes of intervention can be devised to modify or at least better inform community perceptions, but for this to be done successfully one has to have a good understanding of the key issues and actors in this field.

Major players in the perceptions stakes

The interplay between the key stakeholders in the migration debate is so strong that it is hard to know at times who leads and who follows. Clear leadership across sectors, whether government, the media or employers, focused on re-framing the predominantly negative migration debate is largely missing. Nonetheless, there are participants in the migration discourse whose voices have greater resonance than those of others. In the following section, the roles of some key stakeholders are discussed.

Governments

Governments have the ultimate legislative and policy authority to manage cross-border movements. They are responsible for the selection of migrants, and for the management of the interactions between migrants and their host society. Their pronouncements about migration and migrants and about the place they occupy in a country's economic and social life carry much weight and, consequently, set the tone for the public discourse.

Moreover, the policies, programmes, and services governments implement to facilitate and support short- and long-term integration, and to combat discrimination and xenophobia have an important impact on shaping the receptivity and inclusiveness of the public environment to migration and migrants. For instance, the Canadian approach to migration and integration is seen as a continuum, in which selection, settlement/short-term integration, and citizenship policies, programs, and services support migrants' participation in the social, cultural, economic, and political affairs of Canadian society. Multiculturalism provides the foundation for this continuum, both in terms of encouraging the integration of migrants and creating a welcoming society in which respect for diversity and equality of opportunity are pillars of Canadian society.

It is true that in recent times it has become common for a number of governments to acknowledge migration as an unavoidable global reality (which in itself can appear defeatist in tone); one that can

deliver benefits, such as development, to a wide range of stakeholders (the GFMD process may have reinforced this message). However, it is not uncommon for this line of delivery to be overwritten by other, sometimes more insistent narratives that refer predominantly to the problematic aspects of migration: for instance, irregular border crossings, smuggling and trafficking and abuse of asylum systems. The question of the balance of treatment of the narrative(s), as well as accuracy of information, is obviously of great importance here. Furthermore, addressing the benefits and contributions of migrants predominantly at the macro level, can create distance from those directly affected by migration. Bringing migration down to the micro or individual level (migrants as neighbours, school classmates, caregivers, etc.) may help to foster: a different understanding of who migrants are, how they contribute to strengthening the communities they reside in and the protection of their human rights.

A second, less obvious, but perhaps even more effective way in which government action and communication can have impact on community perceptions of migration is related to what Hurrell (2010) calls "performance politics". She argues that migration can be considered as a policy area like any other where a government has to demonstrate that it is capable of achieving its objectives. When the community-at-large is confident that migration is effectively managed, it is more likely to be comfortable with the view that migration is a process that contributes to the common good. Performance politics would therefore suggest that one of the keys to reassuring the public lies in the government's demonstration of competence in this policy field

Calls are frequently made for governments to develop policies that are evidence-based. Yet the call for governments should not simply be one for more evidence but also to re-evaluate *how* they choose to use the evidence available for policy making and interaction with the public on migration issues. An open dialogue which addresses concerns of the public related, for instance, to the perceived impact of migration on housing, unemployment or social cohesion) is critical. However, that dialogue must be honest and balanced. For example, deliberate associations of migrants with crime and criminality only serve to fuel negative perceptions and stereotypes without tackling the overall root causes of criminality among the wider community. Furthermore, in times of economic stress, migrants are all too frequently identified as scapegoats. Challenging such scapegoating requires public policies premised on a human rights based approach which addresses discrimination and the marginalization of migrants.

While national governments clearly have a major role to play, provincial and local governments are increasingly active in the field of migration management and especially in the area of integration. This is hardly surprising, since contemporary migration is overwhelmingly migration to urban destinations. In the last decade, immigrant arrivals – currently around 1.25 million people per year – accounted for 40% of the US population growth and for 50-75% of the growth of its largest metropolitan areas. 27% of people residing in London are foreign-born, as well as 28% of people in New York and 17% in Paris, in addition to growing numbers in urban centres across developing countries. In these circumstances, it follows that it is within urban spaces that most migrants interact with their host societies.

The workplaces, the local government offices, the neighbourhood community centres, the schools and the shops are the "social crucibles" where, under the best circumstances, the alchemy of integration will occur. And it frequently does. It is equally true however, that under the worst of circumstances the integration process can fail, leading to mistrust and suspicion on all sides. Hence, the importance of initiatives at the local government level involving all concerned stakeholders.

Finally, governments in countries with high out-migration also have a responsibility in helping to develop positive perceptions about their nationals abroad. This does not imply ignoring or downplaying issues such as the brain drain which are often behind prevailing negative sentiments. It does, however imply the need for a national discourse on the realities of migration including the decision making process to migrate, the potential difficulties abroad and sensitization toward the needs of returnees.

The media

Accurate and balanced reporting is a key role and responsibility of the media which requires partnership, in particular with policymakers in how migration is communicated to the public. There is therefore considerable room for improvement, and a particular need for closer dialogue between governments, the media and migrant communities.

According to Papademetriou and Heuser (2009), the media has, in broad terms, the ability to act as "both an agenda setter and driver on immigration issues and a mirror reflecting debates going on in public and policy circles".
In more specific terms the media is for its readers or listeners the major source of information about the phenomenon of migration, "sometimes by drawing attention to statistics, trends and analysis, but more often through reportage on migration related events that are deemed to be of interest" (IOM, 2011).

In addition, by deciding what issues to focus upon, the media goes a long way towards determining which migration related issues the public is aware of and interested in following. More importantly, perhaps, the media helps to frame the discussion of the topic by highlighting certain aspects of migration and not addressing others, and in so doing give a sense of how the information provided should be interpreted. Media stories on migration tend to be restricted to a fairly narrow range of narratives often resulting in a cumulative effect or over- and/or under-reporting a particular angle: "Are inflows too high or not? Does migration contribute to economic growth? Is migration a drain on welfare? Are migrants failing to or refusing to integrate? Are emigrants to be blamed for a loss in human capital?" It is much less common to come across broader evidence-based discussion of the nature contemporary mobility. IOM's World Migration Report (WMR) 2011 further notes episodic coverage; a focus on irregularity and criminality; a tendency towards exaggeration of the facts and a lack of proper context.

From a positive perspective, the media has, in recent years, given increasingly greater prominence to the topic of migration, acknowledging it as an issue of global and national significance. In addition, though media integration (inclusion reporters, journalists from diverse cultural backgrounds) remains a challenge in mainstream media, positive changes are noted with regard to an increase or diversifying of ethnic media outlets such as newspapers, television or radio often in parallel to the mainstream. Though critics may argue that this could lead to further isolation, such media often play a key role in addressing issues of concern to the community and "translating" mainstream media both linguistically and culturally.

Employers

Labour market participation is often considered the cornerstone of migrant integration in a host country - where migrants come into daily contact with a new language, customs, working culture, among other elements. Great emphasis is played on the labour market integration of migrants which is believed in turn to help smooth wider integration in the host society and perceptions of migrants. In addition, the positive economic contribution of migrants as participants in the labour market has been well documented and researched.

In spite of this, employers have remained a relatively silent voice in the political and public discourse on migration. Even in times of economic downturn, there have been employment sectors in several countries that remain unfilled by native workers - agriculture perhaps representing one of the best examples. There are occasional observations about labour market shortages and the availability of human resources abroad, but no systematic discussion of the manner in which migration could provide a systematic answer.
Furthermore, migrants as employers and entrepreneurs themselves should also be underscored despite the discourse too often framing migrants as taking jobs away from native workers.

Employers play a crucial role in helping to balance the discourse on migration because they are at the centre of the migration reality on the ground when it comes to employment. Though they may be consulted with regard to setting labour market policies, estimating skills shortages and sector needs, together with government, trade unions need a stronger voice in the migration debate. In some countries, employers and businesses are increasingly very active in recruiting and attracting skilled immigrants to fill labour shortages; they are becoming the main drivers of the demand for specific skills and occupations and they influence the selection of temporary and permanent residents.

Civil Society

As a general rule, civil society organizations are very supportive of migrants, with a particular concern for their human rights. They play a key role in bringing to light the vulnerabilities of migrant workers and in advocating for their protection. In some countries, civil society organizations have assumed the role of political drivers participating in the design, socialization, implementation and evaluation of migration policies and have played a crucial role in placing migration on the political agenda. More broadly, civil society can play a leading role in promoting diversity, which can be nurtured by migration and the participation of migrants in the social, cultural, economic and political affairs of the receiving society.

Civil society can play a special role in providing advice, information, services, support and networks. Specialized community-based associations often possess the locally relevant skills and knowledge necessary to assess and respond to newcomers' needs, bridge them with mainstream organizations and mediate relations with other local players and ethno-specific organizations.

Mainstream organizations (e.g. schools, colleges, universities, libraries, health service providers) can play a dual role in fostering a sense of belonging and security among newcomers while at the same time providing accurate information about them to the host community.

Migrants

Migrants should be active participants in public debates on migration. They are instead often the missing critical element. They take on "the role of the passive actor, who is spoken of, who is at the centre of a heated debate, yet who remains almost peripheral to the analysis" (IOM, 2011). There is therefore enormous scope for migrants to be more engaged in the shaping of public perceptions about migration and about themselves and to be given the space to do so. And while doing so, they should also take the opportunity to consider and, if necessary, adjust their own perceptions of themselves: ultimately their experience of migration may turn out to be either fulfilling or frustrating depending on whether they come to see themselves as an integral part of their host society or as living in alienation within it. Similarly, their role and expectations ("migration burden") vis-a-vis their countries or communities of origin may require adjustment in order to facilitate increased understanding of the migration experience back home.

As mentioned previously, ethnic media has played a role in making migrants voices better heard. New social media has the potential to increase this even further through its global reach and ability to link communities, both migrant and non, across the world. Social media allows migrants to also further navigate their identity and the transnational space between their host and home communities whether as first, second, third generation or diaspora communities. Young migrants are key actors as well, not least because they are also often the early adopters of new communication, social media and other technologies. In addition, they also have the potential to play multiple roles as shapers of perceptions whether as inter-cultural and inter-generational ambassadors, peer-to-peer facilitators or even community mobilisers.

Approaches and areas of intervention

This paper has set out to analyse some of the factors that shape public perceptions on migrants and migration as well as the roles key stakeholders play in how perceptions are formed and ultimately communicated. While it is clear that significantly more attention has been paid to this topic in the research from the perspective of developed destination countries, it is an area of relevance and concern for developing countries who may also be receivers of migrants in addition to senders. The image of migrants in society, whether in countries of destination or as emigrants from or returnees to their countries of origin, has an impact upon their lived experience which requires further attention. How migrants are perceived may ultimately impact attitudes and behaviours toward them with implications for the protection of their human rights and their ability to fully contribute to their countries of destination and origin.

Policy and programmatic efforts focused on fostering positive perceptions of migrants or migration, or combating negative perceptions – such as public awareness campaigns; or community dialogue on the nature and purpose of migration; or the mobilization of "migrant ambassadors" - fall largely under the scope of broader integration-oriented initiatives. The four clusters of projects highlighted below have been drawn from such initiatives. They focus, respectively, on ways to increase social connections among migrants and natives; facilitating outreach whether in countries of origin or destination; building a foundation of rights; and encouraging migrants to express themselves. They are meant to be seen mainly as examples of what has been attempted and as sources of ideas for experimentation. As formal evaluations are not always readily available, the aim here is to highlight the objectives that underpin the examples listed, rather than to assess their respective merits and successes.

1) Promoting social connections and diversity: this cluster of initiatives focuses on bringing migrant and native communities together, creating common spaces for interaction and dialogue and celebrating diversity.

- **France: The Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration**

  Opened in Paris in 2007, this museum focuses on the contributions of migrants to the construction of modern-day France, and its creation included input from various members of academia, migrant organizations and migrant communities. Its main goal is to encourage the French public to fully appreciate the role immigration played in shaping its history.
  www.histoire-immigration.fr

- **European Union: Shaping perceptions and attitudes to realize the diversity advantage (SPARDA)**

  SPARDA was launched and implemented by the Council of Europe with the support of the European Commission. In line with European Agenda for Integration (2011), SPARDA responds to the priority of "more action at local level" and its overall goal is to foster successful integration of migrants through local communication strategies. It addresses the democratic governance of cultural diversity, the promotion of democratic participation and citizenship, building cultural competencies and the development of spaces for intercultural dialogue. Seven partner cities were selected as pilot locations to implement communication campaigns: Coimbra/Portugal, Had-Dingli/Malta, Limassol/Cyprus, Patras/Greece, Reggio Emilia/Italy, Institut des Médias/ISCPA in Lyon/France, and the Consortium of PACTEM Nord in Valencia/Spain.
  http://www.jp.coe.int/CEAD/JP/Default.asp?TransID=228

- **Germany: Joint Civic Involvement**

  The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) supports volunteer efforts of those interested in nurturing the community they live in with a focus on bringing immigrants and locals closer together. Both sides get to know each other better through their joint involvement in an effort to break down prejudices, and develop mutual understanding. For example, civic involvement opportunities are available to locals and immigrants who have been living in Germany for some time to volunteer as mentors, helping those who have only just arrived in Germany. BAMF supports future volunteers through the provision of training and training materials.
  http://www.bamf.de/EN/Willkommen/Integrationsprojekte/Engagement/engagement-node.html

- **Canada: Inter-Action**

  Canada's Multiculturalism Grants and Contributions Program supports the aims of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* by helping individuals and communities foster an integrated and socially cohesive society. There are two Inter-Action funding streams: projects and events. The Inter-Action Projects stream provides funding for long-term, multi-year community development/engagement projects to promote integration. The Inter-Action Events stream provides funding to community based events that foster one or more of the following: intercultural/interfaith understanding; civic memory and pride and respect for core democratic values. The primary intention is to create concrete opportunities for interaction among ethno-cultural and faith communities to promote mutual understanding.
  http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/funding/index.asp

- **Ireland: One City One People Initiative, Dublin**

  Dublin City Council's Office for Integration (OFI) lead a key initiative for the city in 2011 focused on city's immigrant population to promote inclusion, integration and to combat racism and discrimination. Titled One City One People the initiative used a variety of mediums to promote the message that Dublin is an open city, a city which respects and embraces difference, is accessible, safe and equal and does not accept racism and discrimination.
  http://www.dublin.ie/arts-culture/one-city-one-people.htm

- **Italy (Reggio Emilia): Centro Interculturale Mondinsieme**

  An open space for all citizens, long-term and newly arrived, to come together, exchange ideas, and generate dialogue about the changing face of Reggio society. As part of its "laboratory of ideas," the Center publishes a regular column in the local paper highlighting the achievements and day-to-day positive contributions of new immigrants, especially youth, to Reggio society."
  http://www.mondinsieme.org/

- **Australia: Harmony Day**

  Managed by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), Harmony Day represents an occasion for all Australians to celebrate the cultural diversity and heritage of Australia. DIAC supports a range of community events and activities held to celebrate Harmony Day by providing free promotional products. Harmony Day in 2012 is focused on Everyone Belongs, which emphasizes that all Australians are a welcome part of the country, regardless of their background.
  www.harmony.gov.au

- **Morocco: National Migrants Day**

  Celebrated every August 10, Morocco recognizes the importance of partnerships with countries of origin of migrants in Morocco and destinations of Moroccan migrant abroad including second and third generations.
  http://www.migrationdevelopment.org/fileadmin/data/conference/speeches/Chekrouni_EN_01.pdf

- **South Africa: Nelson Mandela Foundation Dialogue Programme**

  After the xenophobic riots in 2009, "community conversations" were established in five South African provinces which experienced the violence. More than 3 community conversations were facilitated and 30 facilitators trained to create dialogue and build a sense of trust among migrants and the native community.
  www.nelsonmadelafoundation.org

2) Facilitating outreach: these initiatives target outreach so that migrants can be supported throughout the migration life cycle whether in countries of origin or destination as well as connecting the diaspora in order to enhance and emphasize their contributions.

- **Canada: Best Employers for New Canadians**

  This competition now in its 6th year recognizes Canada's best employers for recent migrants. Such employers generally offer innovative programmes for new arrivals to assist in their transition in the workplace and in Canadian society. These generally include specific orientation programmes for migrants: steps to assisting recognition of foreign credentials; internal coaching or mentoring; and training for other employees and managers in cross cultural communication.
  http://www.canadastop100.com/immigrants/

- **Spain: Public Radio and Television**

  Spanish public radio and TV include specific content on immigration and promoting cultural diversity, such as "A World" on TV3 (Catalonia), 'Bienvenidos' on Canal Sur Radio (Andalusia) and 'Telenoticias sin fronteras' on TeleMadrid (Madrid). These programmes offer useful information and cultural content for migrant workers to extend communication and empathy bridges between local and migrant populations.
  http://www.euromedalex.org/ar/node/12473

- **Singapore: The National Integration Council (NIC)**

  Set up in April 2009, the NIC seeks to promote and foster social integration among Singaporeans and new immigrants. The NIC encourages collaborative social integration efforts among the people, the public and the private (3P) sectors. The NIC drives new integration initiatives in schools, workplaces, the community and through the media. Four National Integration Working Groups (NIWGs) have been set up to support the NIC in these four areas.
  http://app.nationalintegrationcouncil.org.sg

- **Uruguay's *Departmento 20***

  The above is the popular name given to Uruguay's diaspora, compromising the 20th of its 19 administrative districts. Consultative Councils have been created under the auspices of the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 14 countries in order to provide a support network for migrants abroad and maintain ties to their country of origin.
http://www.d20.org.uy/

3) Building foundations: these initiatives highlight the importance of having institutions, policies and frameworks across sectors that have as their cornerstone the rights of migrants (i.e., anti-discrimination, fair reporting)

- **Argentina: National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI)**

    The government of Argentina created the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI) in 1995 as a decentralized agency. INADIs work focuses on guaranteeing the rights of all whose rights may be affected by discrimination based on nationality, ethnic origin, religion, sex, age and disability. Proposing national policies on racism and xenophobia, developing educational campaigns focused on the values of cultural diversity, spreading the principles outlined in Argentina's constitution and international law on anti-discrimination and directly responding to reports of discrimination are among its numerous objectives.
    www.inadi.gov.ar

- **Spain: Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (Observatorio Español del Racismo y la Xenofobia)**

    Created and supported by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Immigration, the observatory conducts research, organises anti-discrimination campaigns. In coordination with non-governmental organizations, the observatory also disseminates information on migration and is involved in activities to improve the image of migrants.
    www.oberaxe.es

- **United Kingdom: Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)**

    EHRC has the statutory remit to promote and monitor human rights; and to protect, enforce and promote equality across the nine "protected" grounds - age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender reassignment. It plays a regulatory and enforcement role to change behaviour in society and to prevent and stop unlawful actions through working with individuals and organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
    http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/

- **The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

    The 10 July 2006 Report on "The image of asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees in the media" (Doc. 11011) by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population made recommendations concerning legislative framework, codes of conduct, training and in other areas related to improving media's role in fostering social cohesion and accurate reporting on migration:
    http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc06/EDOC11011.htm

- **Scotland: the Press Complaints Commission (PCC)**

    The work of the Press Complaints Commission helps provide an outlet for many migrants to voice their concerns about inaccurate reporting. The equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament has encouraged migrants and the representatives to engage positively

with the PCC when there are such instances.
http://www.pcc.org.uk/news/index.html?article=NDQyNA==

- **CARICOM – "Move Don't Lose" CARICOM Agreement slogan**

  This slogan as part of CARCICOM's agreement on the portability of benefits recognizes the harmonization of member state legislation on social security and facilitates the portability of social security for all Caribbean workers and based on the principles of equality of treatment and protection of rights.
  http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/migratio n_and_transnationalism_030910/Report-EN.pdf

4) Engaging Migrants: these initiatives give a voice to migrants, enabling them to offer accurate depictions of who they are and what they do.

- **Migrant Voice: United Kingdom**

  A migrant led organisation set up to develop the skills, capacities and confidence of members of migrant communities to develop their own strength, voice, participation and representation in the media and at the policy level. The goal is transform migrants into vocal members who create their own media content and messages and can share and inform based on their point of view.
  www.migrantvoice.org

- **Surprising Europe**

  Initiated by a Ugandan migrant in the Netherlands, is an international cross media project which consists of a documentary and nine part television series. The website is made up of a community of people who are interested in African-European issues who interact on a migrant discussions forum page.
  www.surprisingeurope.com

Concluding remarks

Migration is one of the important social processes that are shaping our contemporary world. It is one of the essential ways in which talent, skills and services are exchanged. Yet migration remains politically sensitive and migrants misunderstood. There is an urgent need to address the issue of perceptions of migrants and migration through informed, open and honest debate involving all stakeholders and, first of all, the migrants themselves.

There are many good examples of how governments, civil society, international organizations and the media have worked towards promoting a positive image of migrants and their contributions, dispelling myths, and giving migrants a much needed voice. However, for these initiatives to have sustainable impacts, they need to form part of a comprehensive strategy and be supported by a strong political will.

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