

Researching livelihoods and
services affected by conflict

Migration from the margins: mobility, vulnerability and inevitability in mid-western Nepal and north-western Pakistan

Report 5

Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Richard Mallett,
Anita Ghimire, Qasim Ali Shah, Bishnu Upreti
and Haider Abbas

October 2014



SLRC reports present information, analysis and key policy recommendations on issues relating to livelihoods, basic services and social protection in conflict affected situations. This and other SLRC reports are available from www.securelivelihoods.org. Funded by DFID, Irish Aid and EC.

The views presented in this paper are those of the author(s) and not necessarily the views of SLRC, DFID, Irish Aid and EC. ©SLRC 2014.

Readers are encouraged to quote or reproduce material from SLRC for their own publications. As copyright holder SLRC, requests due acknowledgement and a copy of the publication.

Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium

Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 7922 8249
F +44 (0)20 7922 0399
E slrc@odi.org.uk
www.securelivelihoods.org





The Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) is a six-year project funded by DFID, Irish Aid and EC. SLRC aims to bridge the gaps in knowledge about:

- When it is appropriate to build secure livelihoods in conflict-affected situations (CAS) in addition to meeting immediate acute needs;
- What building blocks (e.g. humanitarian assistance, social protection, agriculture and basic services) are required in different contexts;
- Who can best deliver building blocks to secure livelihoods in different contexts; and
- How key investments can be better and more predictably supported by effective financing mechanisms.

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is the lead organisation with 7 core partners; Focus1000, Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), Feinstein International Centre (Tufts University), The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction based at Wageningen University (WUR) and the Nepal Center for Contemporary Research (NCCR).

Contents

Acknowledgments	iii	Table 1: Migration rates in Pakistan from 1971-2013, by province	8
Executive summary	iv	Table 2: Overview of interviews conducted	10
1 Introduction	1	Table 3: Male-to-female migrant ratio	12
1.1 What is the contribution of this study?	2	Table 4: Overview of interviews conducted	13
1.2 How is it structured?	3	Table 5: Examples of migration expenses incurred	20
2 The conceptual framing	4	Table 6: Land ownership and housing quality in KP (% of households)	36
3 Case studies and methods	6	Table 7: Vehicle ownership in KP (%)	36
3.1 Migration numbers and patterns in Nepal	6	Table 8: Examples from the interviews of changes in household structure	38
3.2 Migration numbers and patterns in Pakistan	8		
3.3 What do the case studies have in common?	9		
3.4 Methods	10		
3.5 The sample	11		
4 The social dynamics of crossing international borders	14		
4.1 How migration is inevitable for some...	14		
4.2 ...but not others	15	Box 1: Examples of work-related illnesses and accidents	29
5 Negotiating the bureaucratic machinery: the process of overseas migration	19	Box 2: Have remittances improved food security?	37
5.1 Financing migration	19		
5.2 Securing papers	21		
5.3 Finding employment	22		
5.4 Vulnerability before boarding	23	Figure 1: Maps of the research sites	9
5.5 What the process tells us about the governance of migration	24	Figure 2: Share of households with at least one migrant	11
6 The lived experience of being an international migrant	27	Figure 3: Share of migrant households that receive remittances (%)	12
6.1 Expectations of migration	27	Figure 4: Effect of remittances for households in KP and Rolpa (%)	35
6.2 The reality of working abroad	28		
6.3 Does reality meet expectations?	31		
7 Is it worth it? Impacts of migration on the families staying behind	33		
7.1 Material wellbeing	34		
7.2 Relational wellbeing	37		
7.3 Subjective wellbeing	39		
8 Conclusions	41		
Implications for policy makers	43		
Annex I: Research questions	47		
Annex II: Overview of interviews conducted	48		

Acknowledgments



In Nepal, we would like to thank Gitta Thapa Shrestha, Rewati Gurung and Annal Tandukar for their assistance during the fieldwork phase. We would also like to thank Maya Rola, family members of the District Administration Office in Rolpa, and the CDO of Rolpa, Mr Mahadev Panta. In Pakistan, we would like to thank Khalida Rafiq, Safia, Sardar Ahmad Khan, Shujat Ali Khan, Anam A. Khan and Talimand Khan.

Many thanks to Georgina Sturge for research assistance, to Mary Barker for help with the formatting of this report and to Aaron Griffiths for copyediting.

Finally, many thanks for excellent peer review comments provided by Babken Babajanian, Yurendra Basnett, Tristan Bruslé, Paul Harvey, Carolien Jacobs, Georges Naufal, Fiona Samuels and Ganesh Seshan.

Executive summary

This study relates to the SLRC's work on post-conflict livelihood trajectories, which explores how people get better off or worse off over time. Focusing on international labour migration, it follows up on two SLRC baseline surveys that showed international migration is a major livelihood strategy for households in Nepal and Pakistan. We set out to describe and explain, using mixed methods research and from a comparative perspective, the multi-dimensional process of international labour migration from two post-conflict contexts – Rolpa, Nepal and Swat and Lower Dir district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan – with a view to better understanding:

- why and how it happens
- what it means for migrants and their families vis-à-vis recovery following a crisis
- and what it tells us about how formal actors and organisations (the state, NGOs, the private sector) may or may not shape the livelihood trajectories of people emerging from conflict.

Among the findings presented in this paper, there are five in particular that merit highlighting here.

First, despite the huge financial (and sometimes physical) costs involved, international labour migration is seen as a viable and obvious livelihoods option for those in our case study areas, largely due to the perceived scarcity of other opportunities (see also Hoermann et al., 2010). However, access to international migration opportunities is not the same for all: socially constructed and embedded ideas about what the 'ideal typical' migrant looks like work to restrict this activity to certain groups of people. In these particular places, we find that it is young males from the non-poorest households for whom the 'inevitability of migration' appears most pronounced.

Related to this point is that, despite their current conditions of relative peace compared to a number of years ago (particularly in the case of Rolpa), out-migration rates from both places have remained high. We expect to see spikes in the number of people migrating around the time of violent and disruptive shocks, but it is often

assumed that a return to stability means a return of the people. Our research shows that 'the end' of conflict and 'the onset' of peace is not necessarily associated with less migration. In fact, in both our case studies we see increases in migration flows after conflict. Structural factors – such as under-investment in local markets and the global demand for cheap, disposable labour – play an important part in driving migration across borders, as do socially embedded ideas about how livelihoods are made and through what means.

Second, the process of actually getting from one country to another comprises layers of formality and layers of informality. Official state migration channels exist, and attempts are made to formally outsource parts of the bureaucratic machinery around emigration to various non-state or quasi-state actors, but international out-migration from our case study areas largely still happens through personalised networks and connections. Furthermore, where regulations exist, they are often not enforced (see Jones and Basnett, 2013 on Nepal). In many cases, aspiring migrants manoeuvre their way through the process by using the highly priced services of highly questionable middlemen. On the one hand, the layers of informality – the parts of the process that are essentially ungoverned by the state – offer a means of mobility, particularly to those whose access to the official channels is barred for whatever reason (in many cases, inadequate skills). But on the other hand, it is arguably the fragmented and grey nature of the way in which the process is governed that creates new risks and vulnerabilities for those passing through the system.

Third, the migration process is characterised by exploitation at different stages – a finding that came out particularly strongly from the Rolpa case study. Our evidence suggests there is considerable potential for exploitation of migrants throughout the sending process – that is, not just at the place of destination, but even within domestic territory, before the individual has boarded the plane. Stories of agents (essentially migration brokers) 'devouring' money and providing misinformation to aspiring migrants are quite common, particularly



amongst Nepali migrants (although it would be inaccurate to claim this is a universal picture). In a number of cases, individuals are only told of flight times and work placement details a matter of hours before departure from Kathmandu. This has implications not only for their capacity to organise and get their affairs in order before leaving but also for their subjective wellbeing.

Importantly, the potential for exploitation within the migration process is not limited to the migrants themselves. The fact that many view overseas labour as the only way of making a decent living for their family (a particular kind of desperation), combined with the absence of state regulation at various points within the process, means that middlemen have the opportunity to take advantage of individuals and their families aspiring for international mobility. Furthermore, the system is set up in such a way that a large distance between employers and aspiring migrants is created, opening up further room for exploitation by middlemen (Jones and Basnett, 2013). Stark information asymmetries and a general lack of familiarity with how things work vis-à-vis documentation, fees and so on become features that can be capitalised upon by those in position to do so. As such, we find numerous cases of families taking out huge loans to finance fees for brokers and agents and other aspects of migration. In some instances, a failure to pay back the loan, perhaps because of 'failed migrations', has long-term impacts on household wellbeing more generally.

Fourth, as the majority of migrants in our case studies migrated to Gulf states, our study has added to the growing picture of the grim and often dangerous reality of working in these countries, again characterised by highly exploitative relationships. Difficulties experienced by migrants include long working hours with few breaks, an unfamiliar culture, and difficult and often dangerous jobs. Furthermore, in both case studies issues around salary were of huge concern to migrants. At least one-third of our respondents had some kind of problem around payment – these included remuneration not corresponding to the formal/informal terms of reference, additional costs being taken out of the wage, delays in the payment, or not being

paid at all. Our interviews speak of the constant struggles (few of which were successful) to rectify problems. While aspiring migrants often seem to be aware of the general risks or problems working abroad, they seem to be unaware of specific risks and coping strategies.

Finally, it is abundantly clear from our research – and much other existing work – that migration produces wide-ranging effects beyond the material and financial. Again, these effects are felt not just by the migrants but also those they leave behind: family members and wider communities. Some studies have found negative effects on the subjective wellbeing of wives whose husbands spend years working overseas (e.g. Hoermann et al., 2010), but there is no single, homogenous story. Having an international migrant within the family can bring a certain status to the household, which potentially has further positive spillover effects on material variables, such as access to credit or local labour for agriculture (because of greater social capital). Stepping away from the question of whether each effect is positive or negative, and which outweighs the other, migration produces unavoidable social effects on family and community structures, leading to shifts and reversals in roles, responsibilities, power relations and decision-making. These changes can have tangible effects on the household members who stay behind, including on different family members' workloads (with women in Rolpa often performing new roles that are socially stigmatised), on the educational access and attainment of children, and, in KP, on the mobility of female household members.

Perhaps most of all, the findings of this study speak to the (potential) importance of international labour migration as a way of making a living – particularly for those from difficult environments. As such, we briefly draw out a number of policy implications for how governments and aid agencies can more effectively support the livelihoods of households in Rolpa, KP and similar crisis-affected areas. These include investing in local employment and markets, reducing the excess costs involved in migration, enforcing existing state regulation, and reducing information asymmetries.

1 Introduction

This study considers post-conflict livelihood recovery in Nepal and Pakistan with a focus on the role of international labour migration. It contributes to the research of the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC), which is concerned with, amongst other things, trying to better understand processes of livelihood recovery following a conflict or crisis. The Consortium is doing this in a number of ways and by using multiple research methods, one of which is an original panel survey designed to generate longitudinal data from five countries on people's livelihoods, their access to services, and their relationships with governance actors. This particular study builds on this cross-country survey, the first wave of which was implemented in 2012.

Evidence from the first round of the longitudinal survey has shown that livelihood recovery takes different forms, but in both Nepal and Pakistan international labour migration stands out as a particularly important livelihood strategy (Shahbaz et al., 2014; Upreti et al., 2014). In the Pakistan survey, focused on Swat and lower Dir district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, 34% of households have at least one international migrant, and remittances are considered the primary income source for sampled households (Shahbaz et al., 2014). In Nepal, SLRC's survey covered a sample population split across Bardiya, Ilam and Rolpa districts: it found that approximately 7% of households have an international migrant¹ and 10% of households consider remittances their most important income source (Upreti et al., 2014). We also know from other secondary sources that international labour migration is hugely common in both of these countries (Hunzai, 2010; Jones and Basnett, 2013; Hoermann et al., 2010).

The two geographical locations with which this study is concerned have relatively recent histories of crisis and dislocation. Rolpa featured as a major epicentre of Nepal's Maoist uprising from 1996-2006, resulting in a violent conflict between state and insurgent actors that cost the district more than 700 lives (Ghimire, 2011). Swat and lower Dir districts have played host to multiple scenes of political violence in recent decades, from the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s to today's ongoing conflict between the state and the Pakistani

1 This data underestimates true migration rate, as it only measured migrants who returned in the past three years and those that are present in the household for at least three months of the year. National studies for Nepal give much higher migration rates of around 15% of the population (World Bank, 2011).

Taliban and other anti-government militant groups, which together with severe flooding in 2010 saw displacement on a vast scale (Shahbaz et al., 2014). Both places have since seen attempts to catalyse post-conflict and crisis recovery, often in the form of aid-funded livelihoods interventions, although persistently high rates of out-migration raise important questions about the effectiveness of such efforts.

Our study relates very directly to SLRC's wider work on post-conflict livelihood trajectories, the focus of which is on how people get better off or worse off over time, and what kinds of formal and informal power arrangements regulate local economic activity. More specifically, we set out to describe and explain, from a comparative perspective, the multi-dimensional process of international labour migration from two post-conflict contexts with a view to better understanding:

- why and how it happens
- what it means for migrants and their families vis-à-vis recovery following a crisis
- and what it tells us about how formal actors and organisations (the state, NGOs, the private sector) may or may not shape the livelihood trajectories of people emerging from conflict.

We are concerned, then, with motivations, channels, means, lived experiences and outcomes – broad headline issues which are reflected in the original research questions (see Annex 1).

1.1 What is the contribution of this study?

This study contributes to the broader literature on migration and post-conflict livelihood recovery in three ways.

First, it presents a wide-ranging analysis of several parts of the process of cross-border labour migration. In doing so, it builds a fuller picture of how the process actually works for those participating in it. We do this by drawing on multiple perspectives and data points to build an understanding of the migration process. Rather than talking to just the migrants themselves, we also look at evidence generated through conversations with family members left behind, aspiring migrants, return migrants, and individuals working in organisations concerned with the facilitation or regulation of cross-border movement (such as brokers and state migration bodies).



Migrants use recruitment agencies to find employment.

©Qasim Ali Shah/SLRC

The second contribution of this study is that the analysis is approached from a comparative perspective. Much migration research deals either in large-N quantitative datasets or in highly contextualised, single case-study material. Our work looks across two places in South Asia in order to draw out general themes as well as case contrasts. The sites share some common characteristics – recent histories of political violence and/or disaster-affectedness, geographically marginal terrain, weak markets and patchy service provision – but they also demonstrate some differences worth exploring, for example in relation to patterns of international migration. Out-migration from KP is comparatively well-established: migration corridors to the Gulf states set up in the 1970s are now the dominant channels for Pakistani international labourers. Migrants tend to have fairly high education levels but are employed as unskilled labourers at the destination. On the other hand, while the people of Rolpa in Nepal have a history of migration to India, migration to the Gulf states and Malaysia is a fairly recent phenomenon. Migrants tend to have lower education levels relative

to those from KP, and many become engaged in entry-level manual jobs such as cleaning and construction work. There are huge gender differences in both places: as in KP, women from Rolpa are much less likely to migrate compared to males, but under exceptional circumstances of social loss and suffering, a woman's mobility may be less socially constrained.

This study's third contribution is its methodological approach: while the core of this study is based on qualitative inquiry, our research questions were heavily informed by analysis of our quantitative baseline survey data. The quantitative data are also drawn on in order to help generate answers to parts of these research questions.

1.2 How is it structured?

The remainder of this report is structured as follows. We proceed in section 2 with a brief discussion of the concepts that informed this study. Section 3 describes and compares the case studies, outlines the methods used and describes the sample. Sections 4 to 7 analyse the different parts of the migration process. Their sequencing is intended to reflect the chronology of migration, inasmuch as a general characterisation is valid. So we begin in section 4 with a discussion of how decisions around migration are made and how certain types of social groups are more or less likely to participate in overseas labour. In section 5, we detail how the process works in terms of getting from one place to another. We identify the key actors and brokers that either facilitate or regulate mobility, and the way in which migrants and their families handle this. Section 6 is concerned with the lived experiences of migrants while working in destination countries, centring its discussion on the question: to what extent does the reality of international labour migration match people's expectations? This leads into section 7, where we consider the multi-dimensional impacts of international migration. While we are certainly interested in the material returns (and costs) of migration, we widen the analytical lens to capture effects in the relational and subjective domains too. We end in section 8 with some conclusions and policy recommendations.

2 The conceptual framing

This study is concerned with several dimensions of the migration process, including decision-making around who goes, the way in which labour migration actually happens (i.e. channels, procedures, actors), the lived experiences of both those who have migrated and those left behind, and the multi-dimensional effects of labour migration (including in the material, relational and subjective domains).

The way in which we approach these questions conceptually has big implications for how we choose to investigate them and what kinds of conclusions we reach. In this short section, we do not attempt to draw out a concrete framework but rather discuss the key concepts and theoretical approaches that have informed this work. The intention is to clarify where this study is coming from conceptually, so that readers are more aware of which parts of the literature our analysis relates to and contributes to.

Our starting point is that migration is – at its core – a deeply social process. The way in which mobility ‘happens’ cannot be explained away by reductive rationalist approaches or simple push-pull models. To understand migration is to understand the way in which decisions and movements are negotiated and made, and to understand how place-specific ideas of the ‘ideal migrant’ are socially constructed. As Clemens et al. (2014: 3) discuss, there is today a ‘new economics of migration’ where the complex social and cultural roles of variables are explored in explaining the determinants of migration as well as its impact. Previously, migrations were predominantly understood as being the outcome of income differentials between different places; that is, a person would migrate because they could earn a better wage somewhere other than their own community, region or country (as argued in the classic study by Harris and Todaro, 1970). Material economics are certainly still an important part of the story, and it would be far too extreme to discount those aspects altogether. But advances in the literature convincingly show that migration is about more than money. For example, while income differentials might still help us (partly) understand what motivates an individual to cross a border, such an analytical focus tells us nothing about how participation in labour migration is more ‘open’ for some social groups relative to others. It also sheds no light on the role of social expectations and historical precedents – within a family, a community and a society more broadly – help push certain people across a border. Alessandro Monsutti (2007) has shown, for example, how the migration of Hazara male migrants

from the mountains of central Afghanistan to the cities of Iran is as much a 'necessary stage in their existence, a rite of passage to adulthood and a step toward manhood' as it is a means of earning a better wage.

In terms of the impacts of migration, again the focus has tended to be on whether international labour migration makes an individual, their family and their country better or worse off in a material sense. On this, there is strong evidence to suggest that such forms of migration can produce significant economic benefits for various people and at various scales (Clemens, 2011; Clemens and Ogden, 2013; Hansen, 2009), which partly explains why mainstream development policy and practice has increasingly attempted to harness the power of international labour migration as a means of poverty reduction (see Page and Mercer, 2012 for a discussion of the migration-development nexus). But we now also know that migrations produce effects of other kinds. Recent research has placed a greater emphasis not just on the income earnings of migrants, but also on what happens to family members 'left behind'. In Nepal, for example, Gartaula et al. (2012) show how the out-migration of male family members – and specifically husbands – can have damaging consequences on the subjective wellbeing of wives, for example in terms of increased psychological stress. These effects have also been observed on migrants themselves: participation in sometimes exploitative overseas labour markets might generate decent material returns, but the experience of being away from their family, working in tough conditions and risking run-ins with the authorities also takes a toll on the general wellbeing of that individual (Cavazos-Rehg et al., 2007; Knight and Gunatilaka, 2010; Stillman et al., 2014). What the recent research tells us, then, is that migration must be approached as a multi-dimensional process: if we are interested in understanding how it actually works, then we must be interested in its many drivers and effects – and how these vary by individual and/or social group (Rigg et al., 2014).

Closely related to this is the idea that migrations are not made simply through individual actions and motivations. There is an organisational and institutional dimension to international labour migration, which an examination solely of 'the locale' – that is, where the migrant comes from – risks missing. Earlier migration research failed to pick up on this, as did broader thinking in development studies. The livelihoods approaches of recent decades, for example, have been criticised for focusing too closely on material drivers of activity and the agency of individuals (Carr, 2013; Levine, 2014; van Dijk, 2011).

Choices are often made through collective processes of negotiation and decision-making, and it is connections and forms of social capital that enable certain actions to be completed. A preoccupation with 'methodological individualism' therefore fails to capture the important social dimensions underpinning livelihood strategies – of which international migration may be one – leaving us with an incomplete account of why and how things happen.

Our analysis is thus informed by sociological approaches to the study of migration which place the concepts of structure and agency – and the interplay between them – front and centre. Following Castles (2013: 365), what we are interested in is a mix of issues, including:

macro-social structures (states, corporations, international agencies), micro-social structures (families, groups, social networks, local communities), and meso-social structures (intermediate networks or collectivities like the migration industry, or transnational communities), as well as individual group and group action, which helps people to survive and cope in specific situations of change or crisis.

In other words, migrants and migrations are made and realised at various points, at different levels and through multiple processes. There are strong social, organisational and institutional aspects to human movement, whether within nation-state territory or across borders (indeed, there is also a strong dialectical relationship between internal and international migration). Thus, if we are interested in understanding migrations in their fullest sense – from the motivations that drive them to the way in which they actually happen to the effects they produce – then we are opening ourselves up to an investigation of a complex and wide-ranging set of forces and (state and non-state) actors. As such, taking a sociological approach to our inquiry enables an analysis of power, networks and structure and agency. It is these ideas that informed the generation and interpretation of our empirical material.

3 Case studies and methods

This section is split into three parts. The first part discusses the two case studies and draws out similarities and differences. The second outlines the mixed methods approach used to generate this study's data, and the third describes the quantitative sample of the case studies.

3.1 Migration numbers and patterns in Nepal

The first national census to report 'absentees' (persons who had not been living in their household since at least six months prior to the census) in Nepal found that only 2.7% of the total population were absent from their household in 1952. Nearly 60 years later, out of a population of 26.6 million, 20% were classified as absentees (CBS and NPCS, 2011). Of those, 43.1% lived outside Nepal (ibid). This shows that within a relatively short span of time people's mobility has increased quite dramatically in Nepal. That same report suggests that employment is one of the main reasons for these high levels of migration. While historical migration for employment was largely internal or to India, after the democratic change in 1990 international migration became more flexible and accessible as the government opened several destinations for foreign employment. This proved to be a very timely response to the demand for labour in Gulf countries, where displacement of regional migrants such as Palestinians and Yemenis as a result of Gulf war had created vast gaps in the labour supply. These gaps were filled by the cheap labour force coming from South Asia. The result of this impact is reflected in the data of the Ministry of Foreign Employment, which show a surge in the percentage of people migrating for foreign employment after the early 1990s. Records show that while 3,604 people migrated for foreign employment in 1993/94, 20 years later the number had reached 642,296, 97% of whom are male (NIDS et al., 2013). The ministry's latest press release shows that an average of 1,700 people move out of Nepal each day in search of jobs (ibid). The net migration rate for 2013 is 3.3% – an increase from 2.2% in 2012 (CBS and NPCS, 2011). It must also be noted that these statistics only cover migrants who register with the government; it is likely that many do not and are therefore not reflected in this picture.

Regarding destinations, although the Government of Nepal permits migration for employment in 109 destinations, a lot of migration is concentrated in a relatively small pool of countries, notably the Gulf states and Malaysia (NIDS et al., 2013). Indeed, it is

estimated that the Gulf countries receive 48% of all Nepali international migrants, while Malaysia receives 12% (ibid). For the last seven years, Qatar, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia have been the most important destinations for men, while the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Lebanon and Kuwait have been the main destinations for women (NIDS et al., 2013).² However, migration destinations have diversified in recent years to include some European countries like the UK and Denmark.

International remittances are central to Nepal's national economy. According to the latest data available (April 2013), remittances contributed 14.9% of GDP in 2006, rising to 22.1% in 2013 (NIDS et al., 2013). By 2010/11, remittances constituted 30% of total household income and more than half of the country's households (55.8%) had received them (CBS and NPCS, 2011).

The site of our qualitative work in Nepal was Rolpa district. Rolpa lies in Mid-Western Nepal and is considered a remote district with high levels of poverty (DDC, 2013). Agriculture is the main occupation of Rolpali, but with no irrigation and hilly terrain, it is seasonal and largely subsistence-based. There are few industrial activities: the only cement factory closed a few years ago and the local economy as a whole remains stagnant. Consequently, migration to other places is high. Data from the Rolpa District Development Office, for example, show that 10.5% of Rolpa's population of 224,506 had gone abroad for foreign employment in 2011 (DDC, 2013). In 2012/13, a total of 4,925 new passports were issued for people from Rolpa (their data are not disaggregated by gender).

Due to the widespread lack of jobs, cross-border migration to India has long been Rolpali's main alternative livelihood strategy. Much of this migration was and still is seasonal. Those we interviewed as part of this research traced migration to India back to before 1951 when people went as labour migrants to India and also to join the Indian/British army. This timing reflects the creation of a Friendship Treaty between India and Nepal, which was signed in 1950 and allows freedom of movement (of people and goods) between the two countries. Initially, migrants mostly went to northern states like Punjab, Himanchal and Kanpur and worked as *chaukidar*, coolies for hotels, porters and road diggers. Migration of women was generally unheard of, and men migrated through very tightknit social networks. Even now migration to India



Mapping migration patterns in
one of the communities
© Jessica Hagen-Zanker/SLRC

unknown, estimates vary from between a few hundred thousand and a few million from across Nepal (Sharma and Thapa, 2013).

This trend of seasonal migration to India continued until 1996 when insurgency and conflict took hold of Nepal. Fearing abduction by the Maoists, people from Rolpa moved to the adjoining plains – mostly Dang. Here they came into contact with recruitment agencies and migrants and started going abroad to destinations beyond India. Hence internal migration due to the conflict established awareness of and a network for migration abroad. These early migrants became contacts for recruitment agents in Kathmandu or abroad and sometimes also established their own recruitment offices in Dang from where they operated for Rolpali migrants.

Migration to international destinations besides India started in earnest after 1999. For example, in Budagaon, one of the rural research site in Rolpa, people traced the start of international migration beyond India back to the migration of two people to

² Gender differences in destination countries reflect differences in the types of employment typically pursued by men and women (NIDS et al., 2013).

Saudi Arabia in 2002. People from Rolpa also started to do new kinds of work in India such as working as drivers or office boys and taking up land on lease to plant seasonal vegetables. After 2005, destinations for international migration diversified hugely, perhaps with the increased outreach of the recruitment agencies to Rolpa and that of Rolpali people to Kathmandu and Dang (major hubs for recruitment of labour for international migration). Today, Rolpali residents can be found in Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.

Nationally, only 2% of Nepali international migrants are skilled and 75% are unskilled (Adhikari, 2010). The story appears similar in Rolpa. As such, many become engaged in entry-level manual jobs such as cleaning, opening tracks for roads in remote areas of the destination countries, and working in construction sites.

3.2 Migration numbers and patterns in Pakistan

Over the past 60 years, most migrants leaving Pakistan have migrated seeking better economic opportunities and benefits for themselves, their families and communities. Unfavourable socioeconomic conditions, high levels of unemployment, high inflation and uncertain political circumstances over the years have helped drive migration flows. Workers from Pakistan migrated to the UK and other western countries in the 1950s and 1960s. These migrants were mostly men with relatively low education levels, who took up low-paid industrial jobs (PILDAT, 2008).

It was after the oil boom in 1970s that a major avenue was opened to the Gulf states, which have today become the principle destinations for Pakistani migrant workers.

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, there have been new waves of migration by young men to European countries and North America (Gazdar, 2003). However, emigration to developed countries has, by and large, involved young men from better off and upwardly mobile families and communities. Because of the high costs involved in overseas migration, it is much harder for the poorest strata in Pakistan to participate. At the same time, the general pattern of migration to developed countries has changed: greater numbers of less educated young men are now taking their chances and overstaying their visitor visas. They are hence less likely to be able to settle in their countries of destination or to bring their families with them.

According to the estimates of Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, there are over 6 million Pakistani migrant workers around the world. This corresponds to around 2.5% of the total population of the country. An estimated 94% of Pakistani international migrant workers are concentrated in six countries, all in the Gulf region: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman; and around 80% are to be found in just two of these: Saudi Arabia and UAE (Ministry of Finance, 2013).

As with Nepal, remittances constitute a significant part of Pakistan's national economy, making up over 5% of national GDP.³ According to recent estimates, workers' remittances totalled \$11,569.82 million for July 2012 to April 2013, as against \$10,876.99 million the previous year, which indicates an increase of 6.37% over the period. Remittances from Saudi Arabia grew by 12.84% and those from the UK grew by 27.49% in the same period (Ministry of Finance, 2013).

Uneducated and unskilled workers constitute around 50% of the total population of Pakistani migrant workers.

Table 1: Migration rates in Pakistan from 1971-2013, by province

Regions	Number of migrant workers	Share of total migrants	Share of the population
Punjab	3,486,248	52%	54%
KP	1,768,995	26%	16%
Sindh	592,870	8.7%	22%
Baluchistan	105,678	1.6%	5%
FATA and Gilgit-Baltistan	343,473	5%	1%
Kashmir	452,025	6.7%	2%

Note: Based on the labour force that left Pakistan in the period 1971-2013

Source: Authors' calculation using data from the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (Government of Pakistan).

³ Remittance figures from the State Bank of Pakistan, see: www.sbp.org.pk.

Around 40% of all migrant workers are categorised as manual labourers, 40% as skilled workers, and only 2.2% can be categorised as white-collar. Drivers number most among the skilled labourers, followed by masons, carpenters and tailors.

The majority of migrants come from Punjab province, while 26% come from KP, our case study area (see Table 1). This is more than ten percentage points higher than KP's population share. Migrants from KP province combined with the adjoining Tribal Areas represent a share of the total Gulf labour force that is twice its share relative to population size, while the provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan are under-represented among migrant workers. Of the 25 districts in the province of KP, the two districts of Swat and Dir contribute almost 26% of the migrant labour force, perhaps due to lack of employment opportunities, the security situation and the 2010 floods. Following periods of recent conflict, many households in KP faced problems accessing cultivable land. However, the fact that high levels of internal and international migration from KP date back to the 1970s suggests it would be inaccurate to portray migration from the region as predominantly conflict-induced.

It is extremely uncommon for women in Pakistan to migrate internationally for work. Of all Pakistani emigrants in 2006, just 0.04% were women (Siddiqui, 2008). Our own evidence below suggests that women in KP are most likely to migrate overseas in order to join their husbands (once they have been 'sent for'). Independent labour migration of women, on the other hand, is rare and over

80% of female migrant workers have migrated to just two countries: Saudi Arabia and Oman.

3.3 What do the case studies have in common?

This study takes a comparative perspective and we will be comparing the findings from the two case studies throughout. Before doing so, however, we look at the similarities and differences between the two case studies. This sub-section draws out three comparative elements.

First, we consider the motivations for international labour migration and the role of conflict in particular. Over the past 60 years, migration from Pakistan to other countries has largely been economically motivated, driven by a lack of economic opportunities at home. The role of conflict in driving international labour migration has been indirect: evidence from the SLRC baseline survey shows that migration from KP decreased somewhat during the conflict, but increased sharply afterwards, with households pursuing few other livelihoods besides agriculture (Shahbaz et al., 2014). Similar patterns hold for Nepal. In Rolpa, internal migration increased during the conflict, but international migration surged after the conflict with the main motivation being the lack of other economic opportunities.

Next we look at migration channels and networks, where we see some differences between the two case studies. Migration in KP is more established: migration corridors to the Gulf states were established in the 1970s and

Figure 1: Maps of the research sites



these are now the dominant channels for Pakistani migrants. Close to half of households have a migrant. The people of Rolpa have a history of migration to India, but migration to the Gulf states and Malaysia is fairly recent.

The final element is the role of gender. Migration in KP is highly gendered, with women generally only migrating for family reunification purposes. As mentioned above, only 0.04% of international migrants from Pakistan in 2006 were female (Siddiqui, 2008), while approximately 3% of international migrants from Nepal in 2012/13 were female (NIDS et al., 2013). In Rolpa, like in KP, women are less likely to migrate, but under exceptional circumstances of social loss and suffering (e.g. death of a husband), the limits on female labour migration are relaxed slightly, and a woman's mobility may be less socially constrained.⁴

3.4 Methods

This is a mixed methods study that draws mainly on qualitative fieldwork and is complemented by descriptive statistics from a quantitative household survey and secondary literature. The qualitative fieldwork was conducted in Rolpa, Nepal in October and December 2013 and in Swat and Lower Dir in KP province, Pakistan in October 2013. The fieldwork locations are shown in

Figure 1 above.

The quantitative analysis is based on the SLRC baseline surveys for Nepal and Pakistan. These surveys, conducted in late 2012, are part of the first round of a panel survey in five conflict-affected countries designed to generate cross-country data on livelihoods, access to and experience of basic services, exposure to shocks and coping strategies and people's perceptions on governance. While the number of specific questions on migration is quite limited, the data are helpful in understanding differences between migrant and non-migrant households. Findings from the Nepal and Pakistan surveys were utilised in a number of ways. The SLRC baseline reports (Shahbaz et al., 2014; Upreti et al., 2014) and further analysis of the data informed the research questions and the contents of the qualitative survey instruments. We also used the baseline survey to locate 5 and interview migrant households. Finally, we used the quantitative data to complement and illustrate findings from the qualitative interviews.

This study mainly draws on qualitative interviews conducted in local languages in Rolpa and KP provinces. We used a number of tools, including in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus-group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), life histories and community mappings,

Table 2: Overview of interviews conducted

Interviews conducted in Rolpa
28 IDIs, of these:
– 3 with aspiring migrants
– 4 with non-aspiring migrants
– 1 with current migrants
– 10 with return migrants (3 female respondents)
– 10 with family members left behind
Of these, 13 were female respondents
6 FGDs
Of these, 4 with female respondents
8 life-history interviews
Of these, 2 with female respondents
2 community mappings:
1 in Liwang VDC
1 in Budagaong VDC
5 KIIs

Interviews conducted in KP
24 IDIs, of these:
– 4 with aspiring migrants
– 4 with current migrants
– 6 with return migrants (2 female respondents)
– 10 with family members left behind (6 female respondents)
Of these, 8 were female respondents
7 FGDs
Of these, 2 with female respondents
6 life-history interviews
Of these, 2 with female respondents
2 community mappings:
1 in Kabal, Barabakhel Swat
1 in Shair Khanai, Lower Dir
7 KIIs

⁴ As migration patterns in both case studies are highly gendered and female migration is rare, the analysis below is unable to draw out specific elements of female migration patterns. Instead we will consider the role of gender in the analysis of impacts of migration.

⁵ Using GPS locations.

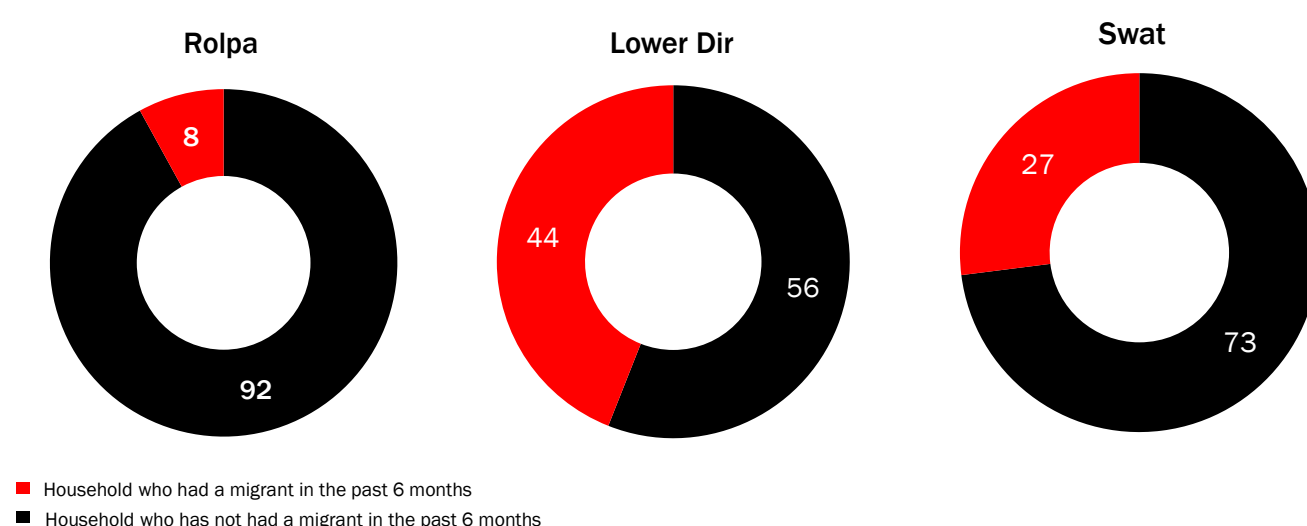
to understand migration dynamics in the community, the process of migration and the effects of migration on migrants and their families. We conducted 51 interviews in Rolpa and another 51 in KP. KIIs were conducted with local and district government officials, migration brokers and national policy makers. IDIs were conducted with aspiring migrants, current migrants, return migrants and family members left behind in order to solicit diverse views and experiences. FGDs were conducted separately with male and female participants. We conducted relatively light-touch life histories, using timelines and other visual tools with migrants (and, in one case, an intergenerational pairing of a father and son who had both been migrants and, in another, a pairing of father who had returned and son who was going in a few days). For the community mappings we met with a mix of community members (male and female) and discussed migration trends and patterns in the community using visual tools. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded according to a common coding structure. A brief overview of interviews conducted can be found in Table 2 and a detailed list of all interviews is included in Annex 2.

3.5 The sample

This sub-section outlines what our baseline survey data have to say on the extent of migration and characteristics of migrants in the sampled areas.

Figure 2 shows the share of households that have at least one household member that worked abroad in the past six months.⁶ It shows that the share of migrants is much higher in the Pakistan sample, confirming that migration in KP is more established. Whereas only 8% of households in our sample in Rolpa have a migrant, 44% of households in Lower Dir and 27% of households in Swat have a migrant. However, these figures may underestimate migrant households, as this question has a recall period of six months and only asks about household members that have been present for at least three months in the past year. The question asking whether the household received remittances in the past three years gives much higher estimates of migration: for instance, 30% of migrant households in Rolpa received remittances.

Figure 2: Share of households with at least one migrant



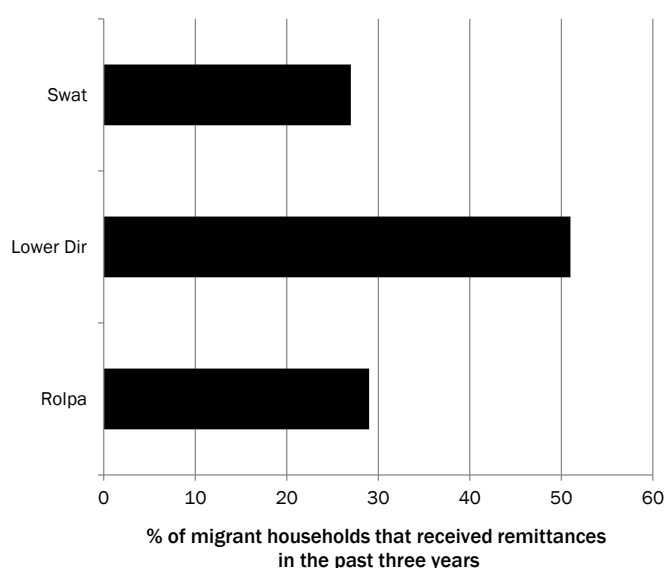
Note: Migrants are those household members that were present in the household for at least three months of the past year and those that have gone abroad for work purposes.

Source: Based on SLRC baseline Nepal and Pakis

⁶ This is based on a question that asks about the livelihood activities the individual participated in, in the past six months, and then asks whether the individual migrated abroad for this activity. However, as noted previously, for Nepal we only included household members present for at least three months in the household in the past year, so these estimates underestimate actual migration rates.

The next figure shows the share of migrant households that receive remittances. Perhaps surprisingly, far from all migrant households received remittances in the past three years. With the exception of Lower Dir, where just over 50% of households received remittances, less than 30% of households with a current migrant received remittances. This is much lower than one would expect, given that we are looking at migrants that migrated for employment purposes, but resonates with recent studies that show not all migrants are willing or able to remit (e.g. Bilgili, 2013). The analysis in this paper will explore some of the reasons why people do or do not send remittances. These reasons are closely linked to the working conditions migrants experience (see Section 6).

Figure 3: Share of migrant households that receive remittances (%)



Source: Based on SLRC baseline Nepal and Pakistan

Note: for both countries differences between groups significant at the 1% level; education categories based on the country-specific baseline survey.

In both case studies, the vast majority of migrants are male (see Table 3 for the male-to-female migrants ratio). In the Rolpa sample, there are four male migrants for every female migrant. This is slightly higher than what the 2011 census found, where 91% of migrants were male (quoted in UNDAF, 2013). In KP, migration is even more skewed towards male migrants. In our survey there was one female migrant for every 32 male migrants in Lower Dir and one for every 71 male migrants in Swat. Qualitative interviews confirmed that migration of women from KP is extremely rare, with most women only going abroad for family reunification. The next section explores some of the reasons why women are much less likely to migrate.

Table 3: Male-to-female migrant ratio

	Number of male migrants for every female migrant
Rolpa	4
Lower Dir	32
Swat	71

Source: Based on SLRC baseline Nepal and Pakistan

In KP, the average age of migrants in our sample was, at 36, slightly older than in Rolpa (compared to 23 years for non-migrants). According to Comprehensive Development Strategy of KP 2010, KP province faces a particular challenge arising from the fact that it has the youngest population in Pakistan, with about 30% of the male population between the age of 15 and 29. The large majority of this young male population has little chance of employment or other opportunities for formal income generation at the local or provincial level, providing a key explanation for high levels of migration from KP.

As shown in Table 4 below, in both cases, migrants are less likely to be illiterate or without education than non-migrants: the majority of migrants in Rolpa have completed primary education; in KP 60% of migrants have secondary education. This shows that particularly vulnerable people do not migrate. The next section explores the characteristics of those who migrate in more depth.

Table 4: Overview of interviews conducted

Nepal				Pakistan			
Education level	Non-migrant	Migrant	Total population	Education level	Non-migrant	Migrant	Total population
Illiterate	40%	17%	40%	No education	51%	20%	47%
Literate	24%	22%	24%	Primary	11%	11%	11%
Primary	11%	39%	11%	Any Secondary	29%	59%	32%
Secondary or higher	25%	22%	25%	Tertiary, Vocational or Madrasah	9%	9%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	Total	100%	100%	100%

4 The social dynamics of crossing international borders

As discussed in section 2, the analysis presented throughout this paper speaks strongly to the social dimensions of the migration process. In this section we focus on the way in which the social characteristics of households and communities in KP and Rolpa encourage and enable international migration for some but deter and constrain it for others, exploring the role of migrant networks. The section can be considered, in crude terms, an exploration of the ‘first part’ of the migration process, concerned as it is with social constructions of ‘the migrant’ and decision-making around who goes and who stays.

For this section, we interviewed individuals on their decision to migrate and reasons to migrate. The interviews showed that both in Rolpa and KP the decision to migrate is mostly made at the household level, with potential migrants consulting various family members and coming to a joint conclusion.

4.1 How migration is inevitable for some...

As shown in the previous section, KP and Rolpa are sites of considerable mobility. As a livelihoods option, migration may simply be one choice among many, but there is a sense in which it is taken for granted by households here, seen as a natural and obvious livelihoods strategy. The idea of moving away or ‘getting out’ has become a fixture of the social and economic landscape of villages in these marginal areas, embedded ever more deeply over the course of generations of continuous movement. It is this temporal characteristic, as well as the potency of contemporary livelihoods discourses in KP and Rolpa, that constructs migration as something inevitable. As Carr (2013) argues, livelihoods discourses are one of three core mechanisms driving actual strategies and activities of individuals and households.⁷ Livelihood discourses refer to particular ways of thinking and talking about livelihoods which then frame and define ‘acceptable actions’ within a particular space or for a particular social group. For individuals and households in KP and Rolpa, international migration is seen as necessary simply because there are so few opportunities to make a decent living in the villages. The following quote from one interviewee in KP is illustrative: ‘These days, due to the increasing cost of life, there should be at least one person

⁷ The other two mechanisms in Carr’s framework are: tools of coercion, which are the ways in which a society, community or household can alter the behaviour and choices of others (these include things like formal state policies, land ownership laws, and so on); and the mobilisation of identity, which refers to the way in which socially constructed roles and responsibilities of different people are drawn on in order to legitimise certain livelihood strategies.

abroad' (IDI-P-24). In other words, migration is seen as a completely natural and obvious livelihood strategy.

Contemporary material conditions in Rolpa show why international migration features so strongly in the livelihoods discourse. While the district is comparatively safer than it was, say, two decades ago during the conflict, political transition has to date proven unable to 'ensure adequate livelihoods for the people' in Nepal (Ghimire, 2011: 102). The SLRC baseline shows that for close to 80% of sampled households, subsistence agriculture remains the most important livelihood source (Upreti et al., 2014). The situation in KP is not dissimilar: subsistence agriculture is the most prevalent activity amongst the SLRC baseline survey sample, and more than 50% of households rely on a single livelihood source, despite living in large households (Shahbaz et al., 2014). Furthermore, more than 99% of households in the KP sample experienced fighting in the past three years and many were affected by the 2010 floods (ibid).

These factors serve to embed ideas around the importance of (international) migration firmly within the social imaginary of families and communities from KP and Rolpa. While (geographically) remote and marginal in a number of senses, these areas are host to thousands of Nepalis and Pakistanis who grow up with powerful notions of the 'outside world' in mind. There is a strong inter-generational character to this. Many of those migrating internationally today are not the first in their (extended) family to do so, following similar trajectories to their fathers, uncles and so on rather than breaking new ground. Others too have found a similar story in far western Nepal (Pörtner et al., 2011). A family history of international migration essentially serves two roles in driving further mobility. The first is practical and strategic: when younger family members follow in their relatives' footsteps to the same destinations – a common phenomenon – they draw on a network of support provided by those contacts. As is well documented in the literature (e.g. Goss and Lindquist, 1995), such migrant networks can facilitate processes of arrival and integration in both a material sense (through the provision of financial assistance) and a subjective one (through the provision of emotional support). The network can also help out in difficult times abroad. As one respondent from KP explained: 'My relatives greatly helped my father in job search abroad. They helped my father a lot when he was injured in an accident. At that time they also sent money and took care of our father' (IDI-P-19). The second way in which past migrations of older family members influences contemporary mobility is less tangible but still significant.

As previous generations migrate for work in places overseas, the idea of doing so becomes for younger generations more familiar and seemingly more attainable. In short, migration networks influence both the aspiration and the actual capability to migrate (de Haas, 2010).

But what is perhaps more interesting is that the idea of international labour migration remains so potent even when aspiring migrants and 'sending' households seem to be at least partially aware of the risks involved with doing so. Villages in KP and Rolpa are filled with those who have been and returned, and just as the migrants' stories of success (probably exaggerated in many cases) are spread readily throughout villages, so too are tales of loss and mortality. The fact that many individuals and their families are prepared to take on these risks illustrates the level of returns that international migration is perceived to bring – even if the reality may be different. As will be seen below, financing overseas migration often means creating debt and sometimes results in long-term asset loss when the financial benefits of foreign labour fail to materialise.

4.2 ...but not others

Livelihoods discourses mobilise social identities, and are central to the production of 'subjects, selves, persons, actors or agents' (Dean, 1999, in Carr, 2013: 86). That is, they frame and partly define what acceptable behaviour looks like within a particular place, at a particular time, and – importantly – for a particular type of person. Research in both of our sites suggests that international migration is, generally speaking, an option only available to those displaying certain characteristics. In most cases, it is young males from the non-poorest households who migrate overseas. In other words, migration is selective. This is not to say that female, older or poorer individuals are immobile – nor that they are cut off from migration decision-making in an absolute sense – but rather that their propensity to migrate internationally is typically far lower than younger males.

The high financial cost of international migration constrains the very poorest households' participation in the activity. As we show in section 5 (Table 6), migrants and their families incur costs of up to \$7,000. For most families in a given village (in KP or Rolpa), financing international migration is not possible without access to loans, which are usually secured through social connections and trust. However, for the very poorest families, this is not an option. Without much in the way of collateral (for instance, not owning land), potential lenders

within the community will not offer funds to those at the bottom, which creates a kind of trap for the poorest. As one respondent from KP explained: 'Every rich person can go abroad but the peasantry cannot go due to poverty. They cannot afford themselves while others do not lend those loans for this purpose' (IDI-P-24). As such, individual and family wealth is clearly one factor shaping who does and who does not migrate overseas. For Rolpa, this is particularly the case for migration to the Gulf states, which is more costly than migration to India.

As we have just seen, the presence of relatives overseas – including those from older generations within the family – also shapes the likelihood of who does and does not migrate. Previous migrations of family members both normalise the notion of international migration for younger generations and produce networks of material and emotional support for new migrants. In contrast, those without familial networks, as well as the necessary capital, are considered less likely to migrate overseas, as the following quote from one respondent in KP illustrates: 'Those poor with no visa money and no relatives abroad normally cannot go abroad in this area' (IDI-P-24).

Table 4 in the previous section provided descriptive information on the educational attainment status of migrants and non-migrants in Rolpa and KP. For Rolpa we see a clear, inverse U-shaped pattern for migration rates by education level (with people with no education and high education levels being less likely to migrate), and the pattern is similar in the case of different wealth levels. For KP we also see lower migration rates among illiterate individuals and the highest migration rates for those with secondary education, but no differences amongst those with high education levels.

International labour migration from KP and Rolpa is also deeply gendered. In KP, in particular, it is highly unusual for women to migrate overseas for work purposes. According to one key informant, while around 20% of new passports in KP are issued to women and children, women are only expected to travel once their husbands living abroad send a visa to them. SLRC baseline survey data provide information on the female-to-male ratio for international migrants from our research sites (see Table 3 above): in Rolpa the ratio is 0.22 (meaning that for every one female international migrant, there are roughly four male ones), while in KP the ratio is 0.02 (for every one female international migrant, there are roughly 50 male ones).⁸ For men, on the other hand, labour migration has become a part of what society expects to see. In a sense, the act of moving away



Aspiring migrants applying for a passport
© Jessica Hagen-Zanker /SLRC

in order to support the family 'back home' can be considered a rite of passage for young men in KP and Rolpa (see Castle and Diarra, 2003; Monsutti, 2007). The act of migration is thus attached to broader ideas about what transitions into male adulthood look like, which is important for understanding what continues to drive out-migration from these places.

What we are seeing here is one particular limit on acceptable behaviour for women in KP and Rolpa.⁹ This limit is (re)produced and enforced through socially embedded – and hugely influential – narratives around gendered roles and responsibilities. There are usually multiple dimensions to these narratives. For example, women in Rolpa are expected to take care of the family

⁸ It should be noted that our survey data are not representative at district or regional levels.

⁹ As a side note, there are different dynamics at play vis-à-vis internal migration. In Rolpa, for example, we found several cases of young women migrating to Kathmandu to work in brick factories or in some other form of hard labour. It was also not uncommon for young women to cross over the border to work in India. But, generally speaking, they are far less likely than men to reach the Gulf states or east Asian countries through labour migration.

members, in-laws and assets left behind by male migrants. As one 'left behind' wife from Rolpa explained:

The women have to take care of the cattle and their children. Basically, the children should not be left alone [by the mother] for three or four years. In cities, I heard that the mother takes care of her children for a couple of months. But here, they say that for a couple of years the child should be fed the mother's milk ... The [elders] say that women should take care of their children, feed the cattle and cut the grass. (IDI-N-6)

But this is not the only type of attitude that produces a stigma around female migration. There is also the belief that very few, if any, dignified or respectable jobs exist for women in foreign countries, which means that those who do migrate are tarnished as prostitutes or as victims of sexual abuse upon their return. As one interviewee in Nepal put it, 'They say that women go to engage in prostitution' (IDI-N-6). There is also evidence of the dangers involved for women during the migration process, including harassment and sexual abuse. (Samuels et al., 2012). Thus, fears of future social marginalisation – maintained by the potency of contemporary livelihoods discourses and by particular social constructions of gendered identities – place boundaries on what are seen as legitimate options for women in general, and on the practice of international migration more specifically. Following this, even though overseas labour may generate substantial financial returns, the decision not to migrate can be considered perfectly rational from the perspective of a young woman and her family: any gains made through international migration may be undone at a later date by the negative social effects that particular form of mobility produces. Our evidence suggests that women from Rolpa tend to migrate internationally when the circumstances really demand it (for example, because of the death or injury of her husband or because her husband abandons the family). We came across one case where an interviewee's husband had died abroad; upon receiving a compensation payment, she then went abroad for foreign employment just so she could earn enough money to support her family. In these 'exceptional' circumstances of social loss and suffering, the limits on female labour migration are relaxed slightly, and a woman's mobility may be less socially constrained. This is in line with other studies that show that Nepali women move somewhat more freely than women in other South Asian contexts (Samuels et al., 2012).

While clearly significant, both wealth and gender (as determinants of international migration flows) must be

considered as intersectional factors. Important too are class-based issues as well as the nature of an individual's labour market participation in the site of destination. For example, our research in Rolpa suggests that one of the main reasons for members of the 'upper middle' and highly educated classes not being interested in seeking foreign employment was the perceived stigma of having to work in the same sector (and potentially in the same geographical place) as their less educated neighbours from 'back home' (even though they may well have better jobs in practice). This appears to apply largely to perceptions of labour market participation in the Gulf states as well as certain South-East Asian countries, such as Malaysia. What was interesting, however, was that none of the more highly educated people we talked to considered going to the kinds of European destinations where many Nepalis already work and study at the same time (Valentin, 2012). On the other hand, a few had instead started moving through the process of labour migration to Korea or Japan – destinations they perceived as being higher class than the Gulf states in terms of working conditions, financial returns and the types of jobs available.

As noted earlier, the entire process of international migration is marked by strong social dimensions. Connections, family histories and shared livelihoods discourses all shape migration flows, but the act of mobility itself produces social effects on the people and places 'left behind'. When key members of a household leave for extended periods, social dynamics within the family – and relations between them and the wider community – shift. One area in which micro-level social changes are experienced is the domain of roles and responsibilities within the household. In KP, for example, we found that once a man had left the household to find work overseas, major decisions vis-à-vis the household economy often fell on other males within the family. In some cases, the burden was transferred to older male members – 'Those left behind usually male elders take care of the family and children especially food and education, and health related matters' (IDI-P-5) – while in others younger males shouldered the responsibility: 'When I decided to go abroad, the whole burden of running the affairs of the home and family fell on the shoulder of my younger brother' (IDI-P-8). We also found some evidence of households actually bringing in non-immediate male relatives after the male household head had migrated overseas; control of the household economy was then transferred to these 'new'

members of the household as opposed to the migrant's wife (or anyone else). More generally, our research speaks to the way in which migrations affect not just the migrants themselves, but also those 'left behind', reconfiguring family space and producing change in various dimensions of wellbeing (see Gartaula et al., 2012; Locke et al., 2013; Maharjan et al., 2012; THRD Alliance, 2012). We explore some of these social (and other) effects in greater depth in section 7.

5 Negotiating the bureaucratic machinery: the process of overseas migration

Migrations are rarely undertaken autonomously. Most of the time, movement across nation-state boundaries requires assistance, facilitation and authorisation. Migrants from Rolpa and KP must navigate their way through a particular kind of process that necessarily accompanies their aspirations for international mobility. In both cases, the process involves interactions with state authority which are nevertheless often brokered by and mediated through a series of ‘middlemen’: individuals and agencies, characterised by varying degrees of in/formality, whose role it is to help push migrants through the bureaucratic process. However, as we will show in this section, participating in this process – unavoidable for most – exposes the migrant to multiple sources of risk and new vulnerabilities. This is in part due to the un- or under-regulated nature of agents’ behaviour and people’s unfamiliarity with specific details of official rules of the system.

This section describes in fairly straightforward terms what the process of international migration actually looks like for Nepali and Pakistani migrants from our research sites, outlining in some detail the different stages involved and the variety of ‘middlemen’ encountered. Through this, we explore two key inter-related themes. The first is to do with the layers of formality and informality that make up the process, from the community-centred financing of international mobility to the manipulation of official mechanisms by agents. The second builds on this, but is more concerned with how the process actually works against many migrants by exposing them to uncertainty and possible exploitation.

In a sense, the process of migration actually begins long before funds are amassed and passports applied for. As the previous section shows, decisions to migrate, although animated and circumscribed by structural conditions that lend a certain inevitability to proceedings, are often debated at great length within (and sometimes outside) the household. However, here we are concerned with the documents required, the places visited and the organisations encountered as migrants navigate their way tentatively through the bureaucratic channels of getting from one country to another.

5.1 Financing migration

We are also interested in the capitals drawn on that enable migrants to make their journeys. The process of migration is a costly one; for most of those interviewed, financial constraints are the biggest barrier

Table 5: Examples of migration expenses incurred

KP, Pakistan						
Respondent information	Passport	Visa	Air ticket	Agent's fees	Indirect costs	Total expenditure
M. (IDI-P-5)	PKR 5,000	PKR 50,000	PKR 50,000	PKR 100,000	PKR 95,000 (\$7,000)	PKR 700,000
U. (IDI-P-13)	PKR 1,500-2,000	PKR 300,000	PKR 22,500			PKR 324,500 (\$3,200)
A. (IDI-P-16)	PKR 1,500-	PKR 21,000	PKR 7,000			PKR 30,000 (\$3,000)
Rolpa, Nepal						
Respondent information	Passport	Visa	Air ticket	Agent's fees	Indirect costs	Total expenditure information
	NPR 5,000-10,000 (~\$53-106) (10,000 for urgent service within 7 days)	No data: the agent arranges this. For women not required as visa are sent by the sponsors who keep them as housemaids.	Starts from NPR 20,000 (\$212)	Up to NPR 125,000 (\$1,302)	No data but this includes travelling to Kathmandu and staying for 3-7 days.	Up to NPR 150,000 (\$1,563)

to international migration. Migrants from KP report having to pay anywhere between 300,000 to 700,000 Pakistani rupees (the approximate equivalent of \$3,000 to \$7,000), which also illustrates the variability of costs. This can partly be accounted for by differences in visa prices. For example, an open visa to Saudi Arabia is in the region of PKR 600,000, while an 'agreement-type visa' costs much less at about PKR 250,000 (visa prices vary depending on the destination country). Evidence from one respondent in KP suggests that migration has become more expensive: 35 years ago, it was possible to get to Saudi Arabia for PKR 9,000 – a fraction of today's costs (IDI-P-4). The costs of international migration for those in Rolpa are generally not as high, usually coming in at somewhere between \$1,000 and \$2,500. However, given income differentials between our two sites, these figures equate to significant expenditures for individuals and households in both places. For instance, average migration loans, as measured in the Nepal SLRC baseline survey, amount to about 97% of mean annual household expenditure in

Rolpa (see section 6).

These aggregate figures tell us little about the specific parts of the process that attract financial cost. Looking at a more detailed breakdown of expenditure, we see that work visas are generally the largest cost incurred. Together with passport applications and air tickets, these three 'items' constitute the main forms of expenditure (see Table 6).

As can be seen from the above table, however, visas, passports and tickets are not the only costs involved in the process. In order to move through the channels, migrants typically pay agents – fixers or middlemen, essentially – a kind of facilitation fee. It is the role of the agent to arrange documentation, line migrants up with job contracts overseas, and secure air tickets. We will discuss how this role works, on paper and in practice, in greater detail below.

Also incurred through the process are a series of more

indirect costs. For migrants from Rolpa, these include, but are not limited to: travel to Liwang, the district headquarters, in order to process and collect passport applications; travel to Kathmandu in order to collect travel documents and, for some, participate in pre-departure trainings; and expenses incurred whilst in Kathmandu (accommodation, subsistence, and so on), where migrants can end up staying for up to a week. On top of this, there are considerable waiting times involved with applications: migrants from KP commonly report a wait of 6-12 months, although for some the process can take as long as two years.

Most households lack the finances to send a member overseas. As such, the first stage of the process involves securing capital. This typically takes place within the local space of the village through unofficial mechanisms. In fact, the initial financing of mobility constitutes the first example of how informality colours people's migration experience. Although people have the option of taking out a loan from the bank, in all but a minority of cases families borrow money from relatives or contacts in the community. These informal loans usually cover the entire cost of an individual's migration and, despite the risks involved in taking them (see below), represent for many a better alternative to going through the formal bank system. The following quote illustrates:

So, here is no culture of going to the bank?

Bank would make loans to those mortgaging land that is within the municipality area. It is more complex working with the bank. So people don't want to take the risk. They would give one hundred thousand only, though the land would cost ten hundred thousand. It takes at least a week to get the money from the bank. It would not give money to go abroad. People have to pay the loan back each month. They would come to Liwang only to make a recommendation letter, citizenship certificate and passport. They would choose their village to deal with the money matter. The bank is only helpful to issue remittances and give them to the people. (CM-N-1)

For many, it is simply not worth the time and hassle of complying with the rules stipulated by the banks, especially when the loan offered is insufficient to cover their full costs. A far easier and less uncertain route is to use one's existing social connections to secure funds. Indeed, many respondents reported taking multiple loans from various people in their village, indicating both the significant expense of migration as

well as the importance of having wide social networks through which one can draw financial capital. There is sometimes a cyclical quality to the financing of migration, with instances of some families using the earnings of older migrant sons to pay for the mobility of younger ones.

Although this community-centred loans system is many people's first choice for migration financing, taking credit in this way can create problems further down the line. Creditors – referred to by one Nepali respondent as the 'rich people' in the village (IDI-N-9) – typically charge interest on loans of around 3% per month (although this can sometimes be as high as 5%). This rate is similar to what a bank would charge. This places poor households in a risky situation, and raises the stakes for the migrant: an 'unsuccessful' migration which produces low returns (and hence low remittances) makes it difficult for the household to meet loan repayments and eventually free itself from debt. One respondent from Rolpa spoke of how his family ended up having to sell both property and land in order to pay off a migration loan:

The agent devoured NPR 150,000 and went to Dubai where he died. I had to manage another sum of money to send the son abroad and pay the loan, so I had to sell our tin-roof home. At that time, I had some 30 or 32 ropanis of land. I had to pay the loan at any cost so I lost the land for NPR 250,000 ... Today [that land] would sell for NPR 1,000,000 to 1,200,000. (LH-N-1)

The economic returns on international migration can be, and often are, substantial. There is, as Clemens and Mackenzie (2014: 24) put it, 'mounting evidence that migration and remittances have first-order economic impacts on poverty in origin countries, on migrants and their families, and on global GDP'. Clemens (2011), for example, has shown that removing the barriers to international labour mobility could generate overall gains of somewhere between 20 and 60% to global GDP. For the poorest households, however, the strategy carries enormous financial risk and, as the above example illustrates, can actually result in welfare losses (at least in the short-term). Section 7 discusses how these loans affect household members left behind.

5.2 Securing papers

The next step, securing papers, involves a much greater degree of formality than arranging finances. Once sufficient finances have been arranged within

the village, the first step for overseas migration is to 'make a passport', as Nepali respondents often put it.¹⁰ In both sites, aspiring migrants must provide evidence of national citizenship (usually in the form of a citizenship card) in order to apply for a passport. People in Rolpa also require a recommendation letter from their local VDC office, which is then submitted alongside their citizenship card and a processing fee.¹¹ There are two types of passport application. The first is an 'ordinary' one: applicants submit their papers to a collection centre in Dang, which are then sent on to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in Kathmandu. Once processed, the new passports are sent back to the collection centre for applicants to collect. The second type of application is the 'fast service'. This still requires a recommendation letter from the VDC, but applicants go directly to Kathmandu to submit their papers to the MoFA (KII-N-5). In KP, aspiring migrants submit their documents to a 'local passport office', which are then sent onto Islamabad for processing. Passports in Pakistan are issued by the Passport and Immigration Department, an auxiliary body of the Ministry of Interior. To receive a passport in Malakand division, which includes Swat and Lower Dir, the applicant must present their National Identity Card as well as a National Identity Card of a family member and domicile. Previously, police verification was also mandatory, but with the onset of less volatile conditions this requirement was dropped.

5.3 Finding employment

Once a passport has been secured, in Pakistan there are two *formal* channels through which migrations can be made. The first is regulated by the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), a public sector body established in 1976 charged with recruiting migrants and managing their migration process. However, the Corporation only handles migration to countries with which the Government of Pakistan has signed a bilateral labour agreement, such as South Korea and Oman. Since 1983, the OEC has been responsible for processing all public sector visas, and responds to 'formal demand' for workers from foreign employers by advertising posts to Pakistanis. Candidates who apply for these posts are interviewed by the foreign employers, and successful ones are then registered with Pakistan's Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment. Prior to registration, certain requirements must be

fulfilled. These vary from country to country, but medical tests, visa stamps and signed contracts are always compulsory (Arif, 2009). Despite its formal status, the OEC is a relatively small player when we consider the total number of migrants (600,000) compared to those processed by the OEC (roughly 1,500 to 2,000).

The other channel is privately managed by overseas employment promoters (OEPs, or promoters for short), which are licensed by the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment. According to one key informant in Pakistan, somewhere between 1,700 and 1,800 OEPs are currently registered. While some of these may be inactive, the figure does not include unregistered promoters. On average, each promoter sends approximately 800-900 people overseas each year. According to the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment, a licence enables an OEP to connect with non-traditional manpower agencies in other countries. These contractual arrangements with employers based in other countries allow the OEP to procure maximum manpower demands for Pakistani labourers.¹² Following the receipt of demands from overseas employers, the OEP reports to the concerned regional office (called the Protectorate of Emigrants) to seek permission for workforce recruitment. After permission is granted, the demand is published in newspapers throughout the country. The employer, their representative or an OEP acting on their behalf finally completes the process of recruitment (ibid). There are currently seven regional Protectorate of Emigrants offices, and one of these is located in Malakand division of KP (owing to the huge outflow of migrants from the area). Around 170 OEPs are currently active in Malakand division.

Although formal channels exist, including some which match aspiring migrants with advertised posts, not everyone follows this process. One key informant from Pakistan, for example, explained how the kinds of visas many Pakistanis want to get hold of are not necessarily the same as those promoted by destination country governments: 'The Saudi government [currently] wants all migrants to switch over to agreement type visa, while people from this area [KP] who migrate abroad go on open type visa, under which they have the liberty to do any kind of job ... especially unskilled labour jobs' (KII-P-3). Many (but not all) of those who migrate from KP and Rolpa do so without much in the way of skillsets,

10 Nepalis do not require a visa to migrate to India, so this step is only required for migrants going to other destinations.

11 Recommendation letters are essentially approval certificates issued by VDC/municipality offices to individuals. They are required for a range of bureaucratic procedures, including land and property exchanges.

12 See the Bureau's website: www.beoe.gov.pk/Role_of_OEPs_and_Their_Problems.asp.

which is reflected to a degree by the widespread take-up of manual construction work by Nepalis in the Gulf states. For these individuals, skilled migration is not an option and travelling on an open visa – sometimes illegally – is often the only way to get overseas for work.

In such cases, formal migration channels and procedures take second place to personalised networks of social relations that stretch across space. The significant role of social networks is one of the defining characteristics of migration from KP and Rolpa – as indeed it is in many (if not most) parts of the world. The following quotes from respondents in KP illustrate:

My overseas friend helped me a lot while connecting me with the company for my job. (IDI-P-2)

Relatives are friends already abroad normally support new migrants on their arrival. And also food prices are not charged from these new migrants till they get jobs. (FGD-P-2)

Another reason to migrate to the Middle East is that aspirant migrants already have their relatives there who not only help aspirants in the overall process of migration, but also helping them find jobs once they reach abroad. (FGD-P-5)

Thus, in some cases, labour opportunities are identified and jobs are secured through friends and family already living abroad. Having such connections therefore enables certain individuals to bypass the formal, state-regulated process of international labour migration. What's more, it produces higher levels of unskilled migration than would otherwise be the case.

5.4 Vulnerability before boarding

It is not just social connections overseas that are drawn upon to facilitate movements. Common to many Nepali migrants' experiences is the use of (formal) local agents: middlemen who – for a fee – arrange documents, book tickets and generally assist migrants as they pass through the process of international migration. These 'manpower agencies' are often private agencies that have to be registered with the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment. There are currently 769 registered agencies; in 2011/12, these were responsible for recruiting 69% of the total labour migrant stock (Thieme and Ghimire, 2014). Agents are usually brought into the process once an individual has received a passport. Our evidence shows that, in a number of cases, agents are

identified through social connections at the household and village level. While one respondent described how his uncle worked as an agent in Kathmandu, another knew his agent based on where he lived ('Gharti village, ward number 9') (IDI-N-26; IDI-N-27). These village-level connections are also drawn on to facilitate internal migration, usually to Kathmandu (which in many cases is Nepalis' first major labour migration, and one that lays the foundation for subsequent travels overseas).

For many aspiring migrants from Rolpa, agents represent both a necessary expense and a source of risk. Beyond anecdotes from returnees in their village or neighbours with household members overseas, most are unfamiliar with the nuts and bolts of the international migration process. While this creates a demand for assistance, it also places the individual in a position of vulnerability. As one respondent explained: 'They [migrants from Rolpa] are cheated in the initial phase [before they leave Nepal]. For example, such fellows don't know about the cost of a passport. So they will be cheated by the agents ... Like, if I pay 80,000 to the agent, we might have to pay 20,000 for the ticket and the agent will devour 60,000' (IDI-N-7). Stories of exploitation by agents and their firms are common, and range from overcharging to sexual violence, as documented by Donini et al. (2013) in their wide-ranging study of contemporary Nepali migration. This is something local authorities are aware of: 'We had to write [to the VDC office] that I had trouble in life so I want to go abroad. They wished us well. They also warned us to be careful because some agent would sell us off' (Informant N14). It is also not necessarily the case that knowing an agent personally guarantees protection against exploitation; as Donini et al. (2013: 21) show, migrants often move through complex 'chains of intermediaries' – a personal connection present at the beginning of the chain may no longer be there at the end. The core formal policies that regulate international migration from Nepal include the Labour and Foreign Employment Policy, the Foreign Employment Act of 2007, and the Foreign Employment Regulation of 2008. The emphasis of such policies and acts tends to be on ensuring safe and decent foreign employment. When enacted, both the employment Act and Regulation function to protect migrant workers in places of destination. This is, of course, very important, particularly as a large proportion of international migrants face multiple forms of harassment and abuse whilst overseas (the conditions facing Nepali migrants in Qatar is but one, well-publicised example). However, the focus

on what happens elsewhere overlooks the rights of, and abuses faced by, migrant workers at home – that is, before they leave. While there is, theoretically at least, a monitoring system in place to provide checks on such problems – such as when ‘to-be’ migrants are not given work or remuneration as promised in their terms of reference – our evidence suggests that there are strategies used by these agencies to get around regulations. Furthermore, this legislation is poorly implemented, motivated by corruption and political gain (Jones and Basnett, 2013). In practice, it is not possible for bureaucrats to assess the safety of potential migrants, and so these checks are essentially box-ticking exercise (ibid).

Exposure to vulnerability throughout the process is more pronounced for unskilled migrants, whose movement through informal and sometimes illegal channels produces particular risks and denies them particular protections. Part of what characterises people’s experience of this process is having to operate in a situation of woefully incomplete information. As mentioned above, a lack of familiarity with official procedures creates space for exploitation by intermediaries along the chain. We discussed this with the chief district officer of Rolpa: ‘Nearly 5% of people [who migrate overseas] are semi-skilled, 1% are skilled, and the rest of the people are non-skilled. So such people do not know what is in the contract. They don’t have any idea about the things mentioned in the contract paper. So they won’t be able to claim the money in MoFA. So, most of the Nepali people are suffering while they work’ (KII-N-5). The Department of Labour Migration (under the Ministry of Transport and Labour Management) is the main state authority working to support Nepali workers abroad and is tasked with managing compensation and insurance pay-outs in the event of an accident or death.¹³ However, because so many workers are not aware of the content of the contracts they (often hastily) sign, or because they go illegally, they are essentially cut off from their own state’s services. Moreover, not all contracts contain the relevant clauses regarding financial support, meaning that an individual who signs without reading and understanding is simply not entitled at all (KII-N-5).

The following interview extract shows how the practices of many agents and manpower agencies in Nepal

¹³ There is also a number of NGOs who provide forms of support to Nepalese citizens working overseas. See, for example, the Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee: www.pncc.org.np/?content&id=1. However, none of these were mentioned by migrants during the interviews. NGO support for Pakistani migrants working overseas is very limited.

capitalise on aspiring migrants’ vulnerability and unfamiliarity with the process:

When do you fill the contract?

The manpower fills it earlier and we are given before going.

You are given it to sign before you fly?

Yes. Sometimes they cheat. We only know when we receive the passport, visa and ticket.

Is it written in Nepali or in English?

It is written in English.

Those who don’t know English know nothing?

That is right. There would be no chance to seek help from people who know English because we would be in hurry.

They say that your plane is about to set off?

Yes, the flight was in four and half hours. And I was given the passport and other documents four hours before the flight. I booked a taxi in a hurry and went. I had paid 300 for the taxi fare.

You pay the taxi fair?

I pay.

Does the agent come in the day you are flying?

They hide. They give the documents and submit us to the manpower stating the day of flight. We cannot find him. (CM-N-2)

5.5 What the process tells us about the governance of migration

What does the process of international migration tell us about how the state in Nepal and Pakistan works vis-à-vis migration? In the case of Pakistan, it seems quite clear that the state is essentially absent from people’s experiences of migration: even where policies and schemes are officially in place, many are not aware of them. The following quote captures the experiences of many of those we spoke with in KP, negotiating

international mobility as they had done primarily through social connections rather than state channels: 'Our brothers helped us. But the government did not help us' (Informant IDI-P-16). Based on our research, it seems that many view the state's absence in this domain as simply another example of the historical lack of state intervention in their lives (e.g. people often complained about non-existent government support during and after crisis). In this regard, the invisibility of the state throughout the migration process for Pakistani migrants should not be seen as unique, but rather as a continuation of weak state-society relations.

Our research suggests that migrants and their families in Rolpa perhaps had a less problematic experience with the state with regard to the process of migration. Many of those we talked with spoke positively of the timely delivery of document and passport services. But there is something illustrative about the way in which migration is regarded as a completely natural or normal livelihoods strategy in both our case studies. People have migrated for generations, which is linked to the difficult geographies of the areas as well as weak investment in employment opportunities. Indeed, the relationship between people in Rolpa and the Nepali state looks far less healthy when people talk of their expectations of the state vis-à-vis local employment generation, and its failure to meet them.

As discussed in section 3 above, today's migrants are following closely in the footsteps of previous generations (with some differences regarding destination and process). At the same time, while migration from these areas is deeply rooted – taken for granted, almost – the very act of migrating overseas arguably embodies a particular frustration with the state. Exposed to the forces of globalisation and often seeing first-hand what exists elsewhere in terms of economic opportunity (as well as new technologies which expose people to new cultural influences), many people experience a bitterness that the state is not investing in their area (or creating the enabling environment for private investment and the creation of new markets). For those born into marginal and quite remote areas, it is seen as the responsibility of the state to provide not just services but also viable economic opportunities. The fact that many do not feel the state is performing this function places a strain on their relationship with the state, which is further exacerbated by the idea that it is the migrants who are helping the state, not the other way around. The following two quotes – the first from a Nepali respondent, the second from a Pakistani respondent – are illustrative:

Leaving the country and going abroad is not people's wish; it is their compulsion. The state should manage [the process of migration]. The state has not performed its role so people are going abroad because of their poverty. It's not like everyone earns there. Some have lost their life. Some have come back disabled. Some get back and their property here has been lost. Thus, I think the problem of youth unemployment should be solved instantly. We have carried a gun intending to solve those problems, have we not? The state should address these problems. (KII-N-1)

So Pakistanis are not facilitated: neither inside their country, when they are making their preparations for migration, nor by our missions abroad, while on the other hand these migrants are contributing in the country's economic development by sending remittances and precious foreign exchanges earnings. (IDI-P-6)

In both Nepal and Pakistan, issues of dysfunctional local governance are key. Plans for greater decentralisation of government have largely failed to materialise in Nepal, meaning that investment decisions and budget planning are still mostly controlled by the central state in Kathmandu. It is extremely difficult for local government bodies to invest in local priorities, which hampers the chances for effective development (Asia Foundation, 2013). In Pakistan, a tug-of-war between democratic governments and military dictatorships has left the country with an inadequate local government framework (Haider and Badami, 2010). Administrators from the central state bureaucracy in effect run the local government bodies, meaning there is little space for local communities to shape priorities vis-à-vis service delivery and local development (Geiser and Suleri, 2010, in Shahbaz et al., 2014: 16). Weak state responsiveness at the local level is, therefore, a problem in both countries. SLRC survey data reflect this: 96% of the sample population in KP felt that local government did not care about their opinions (Shahbaz et al., 2014), and 63% of the sample population in Rolpa felt the local government's decisions either 'never' or 'almost never' reflected their own priorities (Upreti et al., 2014).

Finally, it seems that people's relationship with the state is coloured by its apparent lack of support to migrants living and working in their places of destination. Interviewees in Rolpa, for example, complained that when they faced difficulties overseas, they did not go to the Nepali embassy there, either because they could

not access it or because they did not feel it would have helped. It may be that case that the nature of the bilateral agreements signed between the Government of Nepal and other country governments constrains the capacity of the state to protect the rights of its citizens abroad and to put pressure on host governments to uphold rights and maintain basic working conditions. Furthermore, embassies in host countries are often overworked and/or powerless to help migrants (Donini et al., 2013).

So, once an individual has manoeuvred their way through the process of getting somewhere else, in many cases they are confronted with fresh risks and a lack of official support from their own state. And it is the lived experiences of those from Rolpa and KP working overseas that we now turn our attention.

6 The lived experience of being an international migrant

Continuing through the various stages of the migration process, this section explores the migration experience from the perspective of the migrant, with a particular focus on how the lived experience squares with prior expectations. It is split into three parts. The first part follows on from the previous section by analysing the inevitability of migration, the pressure to remit, and the expectations of migrants. The second part discusses the reality of working abroad and the difficulties in finding and keeping employment, earning decent salaries and sending remittances. The final part analyses the extent to which expectations meet reality.

The research was conducted in areas of origin – we were not able to conduct any interviews in migrant destinations. Hence, interviews with migrants were conducted with return migrants and current migrants visiting family. These findings are complemented with some secondary literature. In doing so, we are contributing to the limited literature on the risks of migrants at the destination – an under-researched area, as a recent literature review demonstrated (Hagen-Zanker, 2014b).

6.1 Expectations of migration

As section 4 showed, migration from our case study locations appears to be almost inevitable. Among the reasons for migration are the need for cash income and better economic opportunities abroad. However, a key factor also seems to be the social status associated with being a migrant or having one in the family. These factors are also reflected in people's expectations of migration. Interviews with migrants and their families demonstrate that they expect both financial and social rewards from migration. As shown in this section, this clearly puts a lot of pressure on migrants.

First of all, interviews with household members and migrants in both case studies demonstrate that migration is seen as an opportunity to earn a higher income to support the family staying behind. The baseline reports for the quantitative surveys have shown that in both case study locations, the majority of households rely on agriculture as their main livelihood activity (Upreti et al., 2014; Shahbaz et al., 2014). In the majority of cases, households partake in low-reward subsistence agriculture, having no access to monetary incomes (ibid). So it comes as no surprise that many of the interviews suggest a preference for someone within the family to be abroad, earning and sending remittances, rather than staying behind and not being

able to earn a cash income. This is illustrated by the following quotes:

I feel that, if he could get the job over here, why would I send him abroad? If he comes home, he will not be able to search for jobs. He is not educated enough for getting jobs. (IDI-N-15)

However, if they were still here then our condition would not be this much better because they earn more there. (IDI-P-18)

Your husband is abroad. Do you wish for his presence around you? In this country?

No. He should earn money [laughing]. (IDI-N-14)

Second, in our case study locations, where migration is a common and desirable livelihood strategy, having a migrant in the family appears to increase that household's social status (if the migrant is male). The qualitative data suggest that this may be for two main reasons: the greater wealth accrued by migrant households and, related to this, the apparent 'success' which migrant families feel they have had. By having a migrant in the family, they then accrue social capital, which can be utilised in specific ways, such as accessing credit or local labour. As we discussed in section 4, international migration is an integral element of livelihood strategies in our case study areas. This means that the notion of migration is set firmly within the social imaginary of families and communities from KP and Rolpa. We noted in section 4 that migrating overseas can be considered a rite of passage for young men from these places – this brings with it a certain pressure and degree of expectation. A small number of interviews show that potential and aspiring migrants clearly feel the pressure of being expected to go abroad.

It is good these days. Before, my father and mother used to think bad of me, but these days – because I earn – they are closer to me. They used to hate me earlier. They used to say bad things about me earlier. They used to say that I wouldn't do anything. They questioned whether I could feed my family. They said that I neither go abroad nor do any work. These days, they treat me well. (FGD-N-15)

So, we have to make fake stories and tell them that we work for eight hours only. And for example, my wife tells her friend that I am having a good time abroad. As a result, her friend pushes her husband

to go. (IDI-N-7)

Hence, it is clear that the expectations of migration are high, particularly for family members of migrants. So how do migrants feel? Do they know what the reality of migration is like? Interviews with aspiring migrants suggest that most migrants are not completely naive and seem to be well aware of potential problems and working conditions, but they are often unaware of specific problems and still migrate regardless of the general risks. This is illustrated in this quote from an interview with an aspiring migrant in KP:

As we learnt from my father, while he was working abroad, migrants are faced with the Saudi Guarantor annual fee for resident permit renewal and in some cases non or late payment of their salary by the local contractor, so the left behind are sometimes faced with severe economic problems. (IDI-P-1)

However, as was shown in the previous section, many migrants seem to be unfamiliar with specific steps in the migration process. This means that while most migrants appear to be aware of the difficult nature of work abroad and the potential difficulties, they are often not aware of specific problems and procedures. These information asymmetries then provide opportunities for exploitation by recruitment agencies, sponsors and employers.

6.2 The reality of working abroad

While the SLRC baseline surveys did not ask about the destination of migration, from the qualitative fieldwork we know that most of our respondents from Rolpa migrated to the Gulf states (in particular Saudi Arabia and Qatar), with lower numbers migrating to India and Malaysia. The Gulf states are also the most important host countries for KP migrants. Disaggregated data on employment of migrants by sector or country of origin are hard to come by, but the following gives an indication of the sectors migrants work in. Nepali migrants abroad mainly work in three sectors: construction, manufacturing, and hotels/catering (World Bank, 2011). In the Gulf states, the majority of migrants work in manufacturing (35%) and construction (21%) (ibid). Pakistani migrants in the Gulf states mainly work in construction, security, transport and manufacturing (Arif, 2009). Data from the FGDs and community mapping conducted in this study showed that migrants in our sample mainly participate in wage work in the construction sector (building sites and roads) and unskilled work in the service sector

Box 1: Examples of work-related illnesses and accidents

He fell ill. ... His body ached, his legs and hands did not work properly, his hands become weak. So he returned. (IDI-N-10)

He says he is not allowed to go to hospital because of some cards. He called last evening. He said he has typhoid. He was just given some tablets. (IDI-N-14)

Then my other brother went abroad, but unfortunately he fell down from a building while working in Saudi. He had his hand broken and so is back home now; he did not even pay back his visa loans, which further overburdened our families. (IDI-P-13)

Once they mixed FC3 and FC4 chemicals. My friends warned me, but I was already in half way. I got sick for two days because of the smell. Sometimes I had a headache. There was a doctor in the company. He was the boss's friend. If we had a cut on the hand we were prescribed gastritis medicine – for headaches also the same ... If anything happened, he gave us gastritis medicine. (IDI-N-27)

(stocking shop shelves, working as cooks, drivers or security guards).

What determines the sector of employment and the type of work migrants do? In the previous section, we showed how migrants often have no choice in selecting workplaces and often no knowledge of where they will work – relying blindly on agents and manpower agencies. However, there seem to be a number of factors that determine the type of work. First of all, legal status matters. Irregular migrants appear to be engaged in more precarious employment, often relying on daily wage labour and not having any kind of job security. Donini et al. (2013) document the case of the 20,000-30,000 Nepali 'runaways': these migrants left their formal employers after having difficulties with their *Mudir* (manager) and now mostly rely on irregular work that gives them no protection whatsoever.

Lack of skills is another determinant: those with greater language skills or (relevant) education seem to have comparatively better work, as shown in the quotes below. As we have seen in section 3, the majority of migrants from both survey sites have fairly low levels of formal education, particularly those from Rolpa.

Furthermore the skills that migrants do have are often not relevant for the kind of work they do abroad. This means that the majority of migrants participate in low-skilled work associated with poor working conditions and low remuneration.

We the people of KP are mostly unskilled, so we do the hard jobs abroad. (IDI-P-16)

Most of the unskilled migrants are uneducated and so labour in jobs like digging grounds and construction-related work overseas. (FGD-P-5)

Yes. If you are not educated and skilful, you will be underestimated. Helper is the lowest level worker. It's like a clerk in an office. A Nepali has to become a clerk.

Are you assigned specific job in destination?

We have no skills. If you are put in a counter, how would you work if you don't have any idea? So, you must have some skills. For example, if you are required to work as a lift technician, how would the people who have never seen lifts work? We have seen the lifts abroad. We learnt about AC over there. We never knew about AC over here. Thus we don't have skills and education. Moreover, we don't understand the language over there. ... We passed 8th or 10th class by cheating. And it's useless abroad. The education system we grew up with is completely useless abroad. (IDI-N-7)

The interviews also suggest that length of migration experience is another key determinant of type of employment. Those migrants that have managed to stay for longer periods of time, particularly with one employer, tend to have better jobs, as the quote below shows. This makes sense, given that these 'experienced' migrants have a better understanding of the migration system and hence are less vulnerable to exploitation (see Section 4).

Dilliriam has become supervisor. He has been here longer.

So the older ones have become supervisors?

Yes. Those who have invested a long time in the same company have got better posts. (CM-N-2)

Area of origin may be another determinant. A small number of interviews with migrants from Rolpa suggest that migrants from other parts of Nepal get preferential

treatment at the workplace. Differences in terms of ethnicity and religion did not emerge as a factor from our data on the other hand. The quote below also highlights tensions between Nepalis from different districts.

When we were new, they [people from Jhapa district] used to order us about and tell to bring this and that. We used to do whatever they said. But guys from Pokhara were quite good. They used to say 'brother' to us. They also used to say that we should go home together. They had big salaries, they used to get 1200 plus salary, but used to behave well towards us. But the Jhapali people didn't behave well. They used to gang up to get big salaries.

How did they used to get big salaries?

They are repeat migrants. Probably, they know everything about going abroad. People from the east used to get a good salary. But people from Saptari and Janakpur were like us. [FGD-N-5]

Our data suggest that the reality of working abroad tends to be fairly grim. The majority of migrants talked about working long hours every day with few breaks and in an unfamiliar culture. This is also shown by Donini et al. (2013) and Bruslé (2009-2010), who studied Nepali migrants in Qatar labour camp. Amnesty International (2013) reports that Nepali migrants in Qatar regularly work 12-14 hours per day in a difficult climate.

Further, the interviews highlight dangerous and difficult jobs, such as road or construction work in the extreme heat of the Gulf states, without sufficient breaks, safety procedures or protective clothing. These jobs often result in illnesses or injuries (see Box 1 for some examples). An example of such an experience is given below. Our findings are corroborated by a number of recent studies focusing on the working conditions of migrants in the Gulf states (Amnesty International, 2014; Bruslé 2010; Bruslé, 2012). For instance, Joshi et al. (2011) found that one-fourth of their sample of Nepali migrants in the Gulf experienced accidents and injuries at work, with the risk highest for construction and agricultural workers.

I had gone to Qatar. I was 16 years old when I went. I made the passport when I was 16 years old. They said that they had bribed someone in airport for me and I paid ten thousand for that. Then I went. I did not understand the language. They set me to work. They had said that the work would be easier but I was given work in 80/90-storey building. The salary too was less than promised: it was 600 but they had

promised me 1000 while I was flying from Nepal. I had to carry a 40 KG weight in the high buildings. This is how I spent my time over there. There was not enough income to save. The temperature was high so I had to drink frozen drinks. Sometime I fainted. Though the work was high pressure, there were good hospital facilities. I had high expenses for 17/18 months. I could not send the money and I could not manage for food from the money I was given. Thus, I fought the company and came back on my own. (FGD-N-5)

In both case studies, salary issues were of huge concern to migrants. Around a third of respondents had some kind of problem around payment – these included wages not corresponding to the wages promised formally/informally prior to migration, not receiving the full wage, additional costs being taken out of the wage, delays in the payment or not being paid at all. We also found numerous cases of conflicts with companies, mainly over wages. Other studies on migration to the Gulf states and South-East Asia have also documented the high frequency of salary disputes and payment problems (Amnesty International, 2013; Donini et al., 2013; Maher, 2009; Frantz, 2014; SOMO, 2013; Guichon, 2014).

As we will show in the next section, with living expenses in destination areas high and migrants experiencing continuous pressure of having to send remittances and repay loans, the delays or underpayment of wages has huge financial and psychological repercussions on migrants.

As argued earlier, migrants are often completely dependent on their broker, prior to migration. Upon arrival in the host country, they then depend on their *Mudir* (manager), employer or 'guarantor' to navigate almost every aspect of their life, including employment, accommodation, food, access to health, freedom of movement and communication with natives. With such unequal power balances in place, these relationships are often exploitative. In both case studies a number of migrants shared specific experiences of being exploited (beyond poor work conditions and under or non-payment) and discriminated against by employers and others. Other studies have already highlighted the confiscation of passport and other violation of human rights (Amnesty International, 2013; SOMO, 2013; Donini et al., 2013; Frantz, 2014), and we also had some instances of this in our data.¹⁴ Migrants lack bargaining

¹⁴ One of the respondents in KP mentioned having his passport confiscated (see quote above), and two respondents from Rolpa had a similar experience.

power and generally lack the means and knowledge to air grievances and navigate the justice system (which does not mean of course, that none are able to do so, see Donini et al., 2013). They often receive little official support, with embassies often being powerless or overworked, unable to help migrants (Donini et al., 2013, 2013). Our interviews highlighted a biased judicial system and lack of support from the Nepali and Pakistani governments. The following quotes illustrate some of these difficulties:

You are not allowed to call your sister?

No. We had to secretly make the call. My mistress used to not allow me to call. They think that we may be diverted by those people with whom we talk on the phone. ... So, I used to secretly call my sister. She found me a couple of times and took the phone away. ... Her children too used to scold me if I miscall and messages would come in my mobile. (IDI-N-13)

My first guarantor after sometime gave me release and then I joined another guarantor, but this guarantor did not release my passport, when I decided to leave him. So with having no passport now, I was sent to a Saudi jail there, and after some time deported to Pakistan. (IDI-P-16)

However, not all migrants were dissatisfied with their migration experience. A number of migrants from both case studies expressed satisfaction with their experiences abroad, particularly at the clean and well-organised living and work conditions. Other migrants talked of friendly relationships with fellow migrants and their employer. Yet others appreciated the new skills they learnt.

We find negative migration experiences for both our case studies, but particularly for migrants from Rolpa. Why this is the case is not so clear. One possible explanation is that we failed to interview sufficient migrants with adverse experiences from KP (interviews were conducted in two districts), given that this is a non-representative study. We have also seen in previous sections that migration to the Gulf from Rolpa is more recent, implying that these migrants have weaker migrant networks, fewer contacts and are hence more vulnerable to migration. As such, it could be possible that migrants from Rolpa do indeed have worse working conditions than migrants from KP. This will have to be explored further in future studies.

6.3 Does reality meet expectations?

As we have shown in earlier sections, the migrants in our case study locations migrate mainly for economic reasons. Hence, they are expected to make substantial remittance transfers in order to support their families back home and repay their migration loan. The majority of migrants feel a great pressure and responsibility to earn a salary that allows them to do so. Many of the respondents talked of the difficulties of saving money and paying remittances, as shown in the quotes below. What made it particularly hard for many of the respondents is that remuneration was often not in line with their formal or informal terms of reference or was not forthcoming at all. As we showed in the previous section, this affected around one-third of our respondents. This meant that some respondents ended up staying longer than anticipated, returned home with outstanding debts or migrated again in the future. Furthermore, migrants worried about disappointing and not being able to support their families, as shown in the quote for Rolpa and KP below.

What expectations do you think they should have? What do you think they should understand about you?

Like if I said that I would be given 2000 and I am provided with 1000 only and I send less, they ask why I sent less.

What do they say?

I said I would get 2000 here and I get only 1000 and I spend 500 and send the rest here, they say why did I send less and things like that. They don't understand such things. Here also, if I drive and earn 3500 and if I use 500 and give 3000 in home, they ask where did rest of the money go and things like that.

You feel they should understand things like that?

I had expenditures. But I don't spend all. It's only little I spend – they should understand such things. (IDI-N-27)

In some cases unskilled labourers work with sub-contractors in the Middle East, who normally don't make timely salary payments to these unskilled labourers. These types of cases are then handled by local courts, which in most of the cases does not favour poor migrants. As a result, these labourers have to start their job from zero, stay abroad for 8-10 years, sending remittances abroad late, which adversely affects their left behind. (FGD-P- 5)

In order to remit, migrants cut back on their own consumption and living expenses as much as possible (Bilgili, 2013; Bettin et al., 2009). One big expenditure item for migrants is the payment of official fees, including renewal of residence permits and fees for guarantors (in the case of Pakistani migrants). The latter appear to be non-standardised, making it difficult for migrants to budget and sending regular and predictable remittances. Regardless of high fees and living costs, most migrants were able to send home between 50-75% of their income.

The subjective wellbeing of migrants suffers not only because of the pressure of having to send remittances. Our interviews also suggest that many migrants feel humiliated, angry and frustrated about the work conditions, fees and bureaucratic requirements, and problems with salaries. Other recent studies on migration to the Gulf states and South Asia affirm this (see Amnesty International, 2013; Donini et al., 2013; Maher, 2009; Frantz, 2014; SOMO, 2013; Guichon, 2014). The quotes below illustrate some of these frustrations.

My experience was very bad due to the bad attitude of the Saudi Guarantor and I was always looking for an opportunity to come back to my home country. This psychologically affected me and my family back home. (IDI-P-23)

Sometime we used to weep. It was shameful to weep so we used to weep in the toilet. We used to cover our whole body and open the eyes only. We used to have enormous perspiration because of the high temperature, so no one would know if we wept. We used to weep and work. (FGD-N-5)

They say that people there misbehave with them and look down on them. ... They need to tolerate everything. (IDI-N-13)

What seems to be making matters worse for migrants is not being able to share the extent of their problems with family members back home. Feeling the need to put on a brave face seems to be particularly characteristic of migrants from KP, most of whom indicated that they kept problems to themselves. This means that the validity of information transmission about migration in areas of origin may be highly questionable at times – a clue to why aspiring or current migrants seem to be only partially aware of the problems experienced by earlier migrants. In other words, past migrants contribute to migration asymmetries. Some migrants (and family members

staying behind) from Rolpa indicated that migrants do inform their family of what is happening; other migrants preferred to keep their family in the dark.

I don't share with my family that I work in scorching 45 degree Celsius heat. Instead I tell them that I enjoy working in a relaxed way. This way of hiding realities and weaving made-up stories makes things worse. ... We work hard abroad and the people here feel that we are relaxing there. Sometime, we are carrying irons and rods when they call from home but we tell them that we are doing easy jobs.

If I share my hardships with my family members, it would cause pointless anxieties. They would tell us to come back. So we have to make up stories and tell them that we work for eight hours only. (IDI-N-7)

No, he has not spoken about this yet. Actually, I don't ask about such problems and he doesn't tell me. I ask about his health. When he was in Malaysia, we had no phones. He came back after four years – we had no conversation for those long years. We used to send letters. Now I have a mobile. I don't want to ask those things.

Does he talk about any problems he has?

No, he doesn't talk about the problems. We only talk about our health. (IDI-N-15)

Finally, some emerging evidence from our data suggests that migration also has positive impacts on migrants' self-esteem, particularly in the community of origin. As predicted by economic migration theories (e.g. Stark, 1991), apart from financial rewards, migration contributes towards achieving greater social status at home. A number of respondents from Rolpa indicate that since migrating, they feel more respected by family and community members. We now give two examples:

Do you feel that youths get more respect when they work abroad?

I was unemployed for a long time. I was probably scolded. Now, I am only back for 76 days, so I won't face something bad ... I feel like I am getting some respect now ... Probably they have said something bad about me when I was abroad. Now they say that the person's son has come home. (LH-N-2)

What will happen after you go abroad? Or what will happen if you go to other places and work? Will you lose your prestige?

No. It's not the case that our prestige goes down when we work in abroad.

They don't say bad things when you go abroad?

No, they don't say bad things: they praise someone if he earns good money. They would say that he has made a good progress. (FGD-N-6)

This section has explored the lived experiences of migration from the perspective of the international migrant. The findings paint what is, in many respects, quite a bleak picture. But that is only one part of the story. Migrations carry meaning and effects not just for the individual crossing boundaries, but also for those left behind, such as wives, children, parents, and so on. In the fourth and final analytical section, we turn our attention to how migration affects the various material, relational and subjective dimensions of wellbeing for families in migrants' places of origin.

7 Is it worth it? Impacts of migration on the families staying behind

This section explores the impacts of migration for the family members of migrants left behind. It does so by adopting a three-dimensional human wellbeing approach, which can be understood as a holistic approach for assessing poverty and vulnerability (see Sumner and Mallett, 2011). The three dimensions of human wellbeing that we consider are material wellbeing, relational wellbeing and subjective wellbeing.

Material wellbeing includes income, wealth and standards of living. In the context of this study, we look at how remittances are spent and consider possible changes in food security. As seen in the migration literature more broadly, households tend to spend remittances first on household expenses (food and toiletries) and then on educating the children of the household and the wider family. In terms of food security, some households suggest remittances enable them to have a more diverse diet and more frequent meals. However, others say that remittances do no more than enable them to maintain similar food security patterns as before migration owing to high inflation and the burden of having to repay loans.

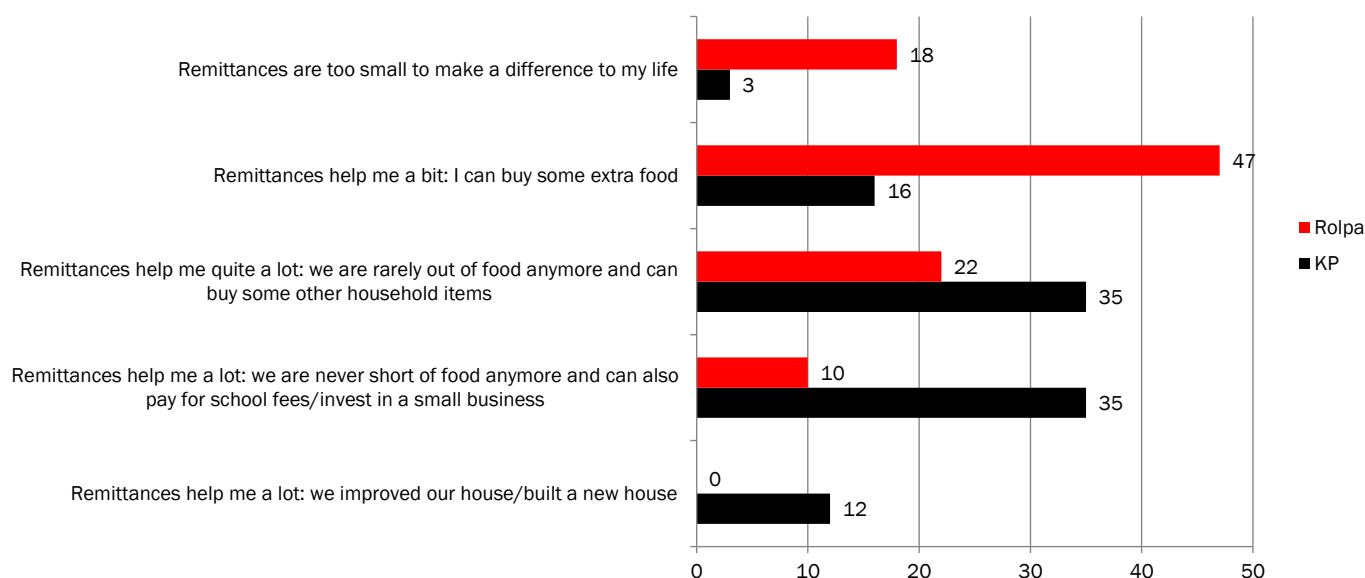
Relational wellbeing considers the extent to which people are able to engage with others in order to achieve their particular needs and goals. In this study we focus on the reorganisation of family structures as a result of migration. In both case study locations we see changes in household structure, but the patterns of reorganisation tend to be different. Impacts are gendered: for instance, migration reduced the mobility of women staying behind in KP, while women in Rolpa shared experiences of having to do kinds of agricultural work that are socially unacceptable for women.

Subjective wellbeing addresses the way in which people perceive, feel and understand their own and others' experiences of migration: their perceptions, experiences and stresses. Our data suggest that migration has both negative and positive impacts on the subjective wellbeing of family members staying behind.

7.1 Material wellbeing

The first aspect to consider is the material wellbeing of the family staying behind in terms of expenditure patterns and changes in food security. This is an area that is well covered in the migration literature, which shows that generally migration leads to increased material wellbeing for the family staying behind (Taylor et al., 2005; IMF, 2005; THRD Alliance, 2012; Adhikari and Hobley, 2011; Hoermann et al., 2010).

Figure 4: Effect of remittances for households in KP and Rolpa (%)



Source: Based on SLRC baseline 2012

We look first at the findings from the quantitative survey, where we asked remittance-receiving households about the effects remittances have had on the household (see Figure 5). There are some clear differences between the two research sites. Households in KP seem to feel that remittances seem to have a stronger and more positive effect compared to households in Rolpa. In KP, more than 80% of households felt that remittances helped the household quite a lot or a lot. The data suggest that households spend remittances on food, other household items, schools fees and improving the house. Households in Rolpa perceived smaller effects from remittances: 18% of households find remittances too small to make a difference, while almost half of households say remittances help them a bit by enabling the purchase of some additional food.

These expenditure patterns are largely confirmed in the qualitative interviews. Most migrant households talked about prioritising household expenses when spending remittances. This included mainly food, but also small household items, such as toiletries or medicine. However, we also see some differences between our research sites. In Rolpa, loan repayment seems to be a big expenditure item for households. As shown in section 4, the majority of households take out loans for migration – with loans averaging at about NPR 125,707.¹⁵ This amounts to about 97% of mean annual household expenditure in Rolpa.¹⁶ This means that the sum of money household tend to borrow amounts to the same sum as

an average household spends on food, housing, clothing, education, health and celebrations in an *entire* year – an incredibly high sum given all the uncertainties involved in the migration experience. Loans are clearly a source of financial stress for migrant households and can hence also affect their subjective wellbeing, as is discussed below. The following quotes illustrate this.

We have not paid the loan. If we had been able to pay the loan, it would be easier. The loan and daily expenses are increasing day by day. (IDI-N-15)

Has [the son overseas] sent money?

He has not sent the money yet. He went last Bhadau [August-September]. The interest rate over here is 3%. ... Each year the interest is 36,000 [NPR]. If they cannot earn abroad, the loan becomes devastating. (LH-N-1)

Other interviews point to similarly high loans and interest rates (see the overview of migration expenses in section 4 above). With average loans equivalent to approximately one year's worth of expenditure, repaying a loan is a lengthy process. Respondents in both case studies talked about spending years repaying the loans. This suggests that migration loans render migrant households more vulnerable, at least in the short term.

In both cases, but especially in KP, households spend

Table 6: Land ownership and housing quality in KP (% of households)

	Non-migrant households	Migrant households	Total
Own land	38	56	44
Packa house	36	55	42
Kacha/packa house	18	20	18
Kacha house	47	25	39

Source: Based on SLRC baseline 2012. Differences between non-migrant and migrant households significant at the 1% level.

remittances on building or improving homes. According to the baseline survey, 12% of households receiving remittances in KP used remittances to build or improve their house (Figure 5). The baseline data for KP shows that migrant households are significantly more likely to own land and live in better houses (see Table 7). More than 55% of migrant households live in Packa (cement houses), compared to 36% of non-migrant households, whereas non-migrant households are more likely to live in Kacha (mud houses). However, the baseline data do not shed any light on causality: migrant households could be better off in the first place or they could be living in better quality houses as a result of migration. The same holds for land ownership: it is not clear if migrant households have bought land from remittances or if they were more likely to own land in the first place (which could potentially also be used as a collateral for migrant loans).

The qualitative data allow us to understand this process in slightly greater depth. In a number of qualitative interviews, respondents explained that they have bought land and/or built or improved their house after the loan had been paid off and basic expenses had been met.

The family was very generous in making spending on food, education, health etc. at that time, as the remittances were in abundance, easily meeting our home daily expenses. We had also started running a public school from our remittance money, and had also purchased land, and then had finally constructed our own house. (IDI-P-4)

Table 7: Vehicle ownership in KP (%)

Household owns ...	Non-migrant households	Migrant households	Total
Motor cycle	6.9	7.6	7.1
Bicycle	3.5	3.9	3.6
Car/jeep/van	6.9***	18.1***	10.7
Truck/tractor	0.9*	1.7*	1.1
Animal cart	6.5*	8.7*	7.2

Source: Based on SLRC baseline 2012. Asterisks indicate whether the mean for each group is statistically different from that of the sampled population as a whole (* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%).

We eat enough now as compared to our life before migration. ... We have purchased a piece of land in the hilly area. (IDI-P-18)

Similarly, qualitative interviews with migrant households in KP indicate that some households spend remittances on buying assets, particularly vehicles. This is confirmed in the SLRC baseline survey for Pakistan, which shows that migrant households are significantly more likely to own vehicles, with particularly big differences in terms of car ownership

(Table 8). However, descriptive statistics, as presented here, do not allow us to assess if this is a result of migration or if migrant households were more likely to own cars prior to migration.

Interviews in both survey sites clearly indicate that food is the main priority in terms of expenditure. Has this improved food security and dietary diversity of migrant households? The baseline data shows that in Rolpa there are no statistically significant differences between migrant and non-migrant households in terms of food insecurity and dietary diversity.¹⁷ In KP, on the other hand, migrant households are better off in terms of dietary diversity and are less food-insecure than non-migrant households, according to the baseline survey.

The qualitative data provide some clues as to why, overall, we see no difference in terms of food insecurity for migrant households in Rolpa. Some households do seem to suggest that they are better off and are able

15 Based on the Nepal baseline survey 2012.

16 Based on mean annual expenditure for Rolpa for the year 2010/2011 using the Nepal Living Standard Measurement Survey 2010/2011.

Box 2: Have remittances improved food security?

Yes!

With remittance money, our life standards have improved a lot. In our meals we eat meat, chicken and vegetables regularly. (IDI-P-15)

Now with remittance income, food items at our home are now more easily available than before, when we were hardly able to have our two daily meals. (IDI-P-13)

It is quite different. Previously we used to eat rice two times a day with a heavy heart and now it is quite enough for everything. (IDI-N-3)

No!

With remittance money we have not purchased any land or established a business – we are just meeting our food expenses on this remittance money because of food inflation. (IDI-P-22)

The migration of my son has not significantly changed or improved our living standards here, mainly because of price hikes, and I would be not wrong in saying our conditions are the same as before. Our eating habits are more or less the same as before. (IDI-P-5)

Do you feel that your economic condition has been upgraded after your parents went abroad?

We get enough to eat. Sometimes, it is lacking. (IDI-N-11)



Migrant households tend to live in better quality houses.

© Jessica Hagen-Zanker/SLRC

to have more and better meals (see Box 2, next page). However, other households say they are able to do no more than maintain similar food patterns as before migration, unable to improve their diet because of constant inflation and the burden of loan repayments. This mixed picture seems to be the case for both KP and Rolpa.

In both research sites, migrant households found education to be a major expenditure category for remittances. Households in both research sites spent remittances on education, particularly private and English medium education

My children are going to both government and private schools due to remittance money. Remittance money contributes hugely in terms of good food and quality

education. (IDI-P-2)

I am going to college now, while my younger brothers and sisters are going to private schools. (IDI-P-15)

It is easier to pay the school fees of the children and do other works. (FGD-N-1)

Before going, we didn't used to get proper studies. I came to Liwang from class 6 and my father went abroad. He started to earn and we got a proper education. Had my parents not gone abroad, we would not have got a chance to study. I had a one-year gap. (IDI-N-1)

However, the quantitative data shows that amongst

17 Food insecurity is proxied using the Coping Strategies Index (see Maxwell and Caldwell, 2008). The index is a weighted sum reflecting the frequency with which households adopted particular behaviours over the course of the previous 30 days. The dietary diversity index was constructed by awarding the household '0' if it reported consuming a given foodstuff 'never' or 'rarely' and '1' if the food was consumed more frequently than that. The scores for each food type were added up to create an index out of 10.

households in the baseline survey remittances are having less of an impact on the type of schools attended by children in migrant households than the qualitative interviews appear to suggest. There are no statistically significant differences in terms of the share of migrant/non-migrant households that use private schools in either KP or Rolpa.

7.2 Relational wellbeing

In both case studies, migration leads to changes in household structures which affect household members staying behind in a number of ways. This section largely draws on the qualitative interviews.

In both Lower Dir and Swat, KP, and Rolpa, migration has changed the structure of and dynamics within households. This change is not only a change in terms of having one less household member, but in many cases migration has led to the re-organisation of roles and responsibility within households or the creation of new households, as previous studies have also shown (Hoermann et al., 2010). The patterns of change differ somewhat between KP and Rolpa. We see three types of changes in household structure in the case studies:

1 Re-organising households to put a senior male

household member in place as head of the household. This often involves the creation of multi-generational households or merging two nuclear households, for example making a migrant’s brother head of the migrant household as well as head of his own household. Based on the qualitative data, this seems to be mainly the case in KP.

- 2 Re-organisation within the existing household to make another household member head of the household. This could be the spouse, parent or child of the migrant, both male and female. This seems to be mainly the case in Rolpa.
- 3 A migrant getting married shortly before or after migration, with the new spouse remaining behind, often staying with parents or parents-in-law. This pattern can be found in both survey locations, but seems to be a more frequent occurrence in KP.

Examples of the changes are given in Table 9.

These changes in household structure are important because they affect household members in a number of ways. First of all, they change the roles and responsibilities of household members staying behind and the dynamics within the households. Second, they influence access to services and public spaces for the household members staying behind, particularly in Pakistan.

Table 8: Examples from the interviews of changes in household structure

A senior male member from the extended family becomes head of household	A household member from existing household becomes head of household	Migrant gets married shortly before or after migration
‘My grandfather had to look after our family, then after my grandfather’s death, responsibility fell upon on my uncle due to our joint family system.’ IDI-P-15 (Pakistan)	‘My husband used to do all the work – everything. I only used to cook food. I did not use to do works outside of home.’ What now? ‘I do everything now.’ What are the increased workloads now? ‘Much work, like carrying wood, grass, fetching water. I have to do every job.’ Respondent 6, FGD-N-1 (Nepal)	‘My father went abroad before his marriage. He decided to go abroad when my grandfather died, and there was no one to support the family, He got married to my mother on his return from Saudi Arabia.’ IDI-N-18 (Pakistan)
Family information Shezad’s father is the only migrant in the family. He went to Dubai 35 years ago (in 1978).	Family information This household is a nuclear family with the wife and son of the migrant staying behind. The husband went to Malaysia	Family information Sheema’s father is the only migrant in the family. Her father went to Saudi Arabia before his marriage, when he was young.

The migration literature shows that migration can have a lost-labour effect, with an increase in the workload for household members staying behind and negative effects on agricultural production (e.g. Cox-Edwards and Ureta, 2003; Taylor, 1999). For instance, previous studies on Nepal show that male out-migration leads to a decrease in local productivity and economic activity (THRD Alliance, 2012; Adhikari and Hobley, 2011). The qualitative interview data show that migration results in an increased workload for many household members staying behind – mainly for spouses but to some extent also for children. We found this mainly in the Rolpa case study. This includes women doing more physical labour, but also increasingly doing work that is considered socially unacceptable. For instance, respondents talked about having to plough fields – seen as a male task – due to lack of male adults present in the village, as shown in the quotes below. This is not only physically difficult for women staying behind, but also stigmatising in some communities. This is echoed in other studies that talk about the difficulties spouses staying behind face in taking over male agricultural responsibilities (e.g. Kothari, 2002; Olimova and Bosc, 2003; Hoermann et al., 2010).

The husband goes to manage work outside of home, and we do the in-house jobs. The husband would do the difficult jobs and we would do the easier jobs. In his absence, we need to do every job.

What work do you do that your husband used to do?

Plough the field, cut wood – we do loads of work. (IDI-N-15)

How do you plough the field?

It was difficult at first, but later I learnt how.

Don't the people in community back-bite?

They ask, why do you do such things? ... I have learnt how now. I don't feel any hesitation nowadays. We should make our own living. (FGD-N-4)

Second, the absence of household heads and male adults in the household can result in difficulties in securing admission to education for children. While remittances may enable school attendance in principle by securing funds for school fees and school uniforms, absence of parents makes school admission more difficult in a bureaucratic sense. The absence of a child's parent or guardian makes it more difficult to meet administrative requirements for school enrolment. This is seen in both

case studies, as illustrated by the quotes below.

In the admission process in school, they used to say to me 'You don't have father and mother?' I faced such difficulties. ... Sometimes the house-owner used to go with me to admit me to school and sometimes my uncle used to go. I helped to admit my brother and sister in school. (IDI-N-1)

We need him and wish that he was here with us for our school and college admissions and other social activities. (IDI-P-15)

Furthermore, some of the interviews also seemed to suggest that the absence of parents means children achieve lower education outcomes than they would have had otherwise. In KP, a few respondents said it had been more difficult for the mother to control children's participation in school or help with their schooling. Some interviewees in Rolpa explained that increased responsibilities and workloads for family members staying behind also prevent children from fulfilling all their educational requirements. The eldest sons might find themselves having to drop out of school in order to take up domestic responsibilities. Finally, as we have seen in section 3 above, migration often follows multi-generational patterns, with younger generations aspiring to migrate themselves in the future, and a subsequent lack of motivation for schooling. Previous studies have shown this for Mexico (e.g. McKenzie and Rapoport, 2011) and our interviews in Rolpa also suggested a decline in educational aspirations amongst young males. The following quotes illustrate the difficulties in securing education in the absence of one or more parents:

The house in the absence of mother is quite lonely. There is nobody to direct and advise children. (IDI-N-1)

Now that my father is abroad, we miss him very much; also there is less of a check on children and less attention towards their education. (IDI-P-6)

She should work before going to school and after coming home. She says that she can't study this way. And what do you say? I suggest that she both studies and works. I tell her that going to school and not working in the home is not possible. (IDI-N-15)

Apart from difficulties in securing admission to education, the qualitative data for KP shows that in many cases, re-organisation of households and absence of husbands implies restricted mobility for the female

family members remaining behind. In rural KP it is socially not acceptable for women to venture out of the house by themselves without an adult male member escorting them. With migration being so common, the absence of husbands, fathers, uncles and brothers means it is more difficult for spouses and their children to access health services and other public spaces. This was shown to be the case in an earlier migration study on Pakistan (Farooq and Javed, 2009) and is also illustrated by the following quotes:

We face many problems – like we can't go to the doctor, and other matters that require a male to represent or solve – as we don't have a male member in our family now. (IDI-P-18)

We miss him [our father] on different occasions and especially when somebody needs to go to the doctor. (IDI-P-19)

7.3 Subjective wellbeing

Finally, we consider subjective wellbeing, which relates to the way in which people perceive and understand their own and others' experiences of migration, including the kinds of meanings attached to the process. While we have less data on this dimension, the qualitative interviews show that changes in household structure affect the household members staying behind beyond increases in workload. The qualitative interviews highlight both negative and positive impacts.

Interviews in both case studies show that the absence of the migrant results in greater stress for family members staying behind (particularly for spouses). There are many reasons for this: the burden of being the sole adult in charge, new and increased responsibilities, the pressure of having to repay the migration loan, or missing and worrying about the migrant. This was particularly apparent in the Rolpa case study. This could be because migration from Rolpa appears to have less positive impacts in terms of material wellbeing that could potentially 'outweigh' the negative impacts (see above). Another reason why this may be the case is because migration in Rolpa often results in smaller households, with women and children taking on more responsibility (see previous section).

The following quotes illustrate some of these stresses:

Whatever difficulty comes, I face it by myself. (IDI-N-5)



Women and children end up taking over many of the tasks of overseas migrants

© Jessica Hagen-Zanker/SLRC

There would be many differences depending on whether you have parents at home or not. Other friends used to walk with their friends and we used to walk alone. We had to pay the rent and buy the rations by ourselves. ... If we have our parents with us, we don't need to think about the things that stress us. I had to take time away from my studies, I had to take care of my brothers and sisters, and I had to search for wood for fuel. I stayed alone from when I was quite young. (IDI-N-1)

The whole family is missing my son. One of his sons always asks when his father will come back. (IDI-P-5)

Having a household member abroad can also have positive impacts for household members staying behind in terms of subjective wellbeing. As is well documented in the migration literature (e.g. Stark, 1991; Hoermann et al., 2010), and as discussed in section 6, migration may improve the social standing of migrant households within the community. Greater social status appears to be largely derived from greater financial resources and the capacity to purchase modern and better services

– such as sending children to English medium schools, having electricity, moving to urban areas – but also just the accomplishment of having sent a migrant abroad.

Improved social status can in turn affect household wellbeing in concrete ways, for example being able to receive food on credit (since others know they will receive remittances). We also talked to one interviewee in Rolpa who explained that creditors are more likely to provide loans for foreign employment than for ‘home-based’ entrepreneurship. Anecdotal evidence from KP similarly suggests easier access to loans for individuals who have a valid offer of work overseas.

Finally, social capital between migrant households appears to be fairly high. Some of the interviews suggest that migrant households derive emotional support from other community members who are in the same situation. We find this mainly in the interviews conducted with spouses staying behind in Rolpa, as shown in this FGD:

Everyone’s situation is the same. Everyone gathers together and talks about their husband and tries to feel better. Now, there is satisfaction. Yes, it is now like that. Before, we were sad about where they had gone and what the situation would be. So, we gather with sisters and talk to them. (FGD-N-4)

8 Conclusions

Mobility is inherent to human nature. As much as state and super-state organisations have tried to formalise and regulate the process and outcomes of people's movement, there is an inevitability to migration that should not be forgotten. Even when territorial boundaries are demarcated by fences and walls, people do and will find ways of getting around them. Such acts of subterfuge, if we can call it that, frequently come at an all-too-high human cost. But, in a sense, that serves to illustrate just how potent the meanings of mobility are, and the lengths many will go to in order to create a better life for themselves and their families.

Of course, this inevitability comes out more or less strongly for certain groups of people depending on a combination of factors, including, amongst other things, the specificities of place, the social construction of 'ideal typical' migrant groups, and the presence of brokers, middlemen, channels and so on that exist to facilitate movement for certain people but not others. In both our case studies, we found that members of the poorest households tend not migrate and that those who have been exposed to the migration of others – particularly close friends and family – are more likely to migrate, confirming the findings from other studies in the field (see the review by Waddington and Sabates-Wheeler, 2003 on the former issue and Guilmoto and Sandron, 2001 on the latter).

In this study we have attempted, by drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data and methods, to assess whether such choices do in fact contribute to better outcomes at the household level in KP (Pakistan) and Rolpa (Nepal). We have also been interested in how international migration actually happens in the first place: how are decisions made? What are the costs of sending someone overseas, including but not limited to those in the material domain? What channels must migrants and aspiring migrants pass through in order to get from A to B? Who are the other actors mediating the process of mobility? And how well is this process working for migrants? In seeking to generate answers to these questions, we draw on data from multiple points and perspectives: interviews with migrants, aspiring migrants, return migrants, left behind family members and the staff of migration organisations and bureaucracies all add a breadth to our dataset that helps us to get a fuller picture.

So, what can be said of the way the migration process functions for individuals from KP and Rolpa? Among the several findings presented throughout this paper, there are five in particular that need to be highlighted here.

First, despite the huge financial (and sometimes physical) costs involved, international labour migration is seen as a viable livelihoods option for those in our case study areas, largely due to the perceived scarcity of other opportunities (see also Hoermann et al., 2010). However, access to international migration is not the same for all: socially constructed and embedded ideas about what the ‘ideal typical’ migrant looks like work to restrict this activity to certain groups of people. In these particular places, we find that it is young males from the non-poorest households for whom the ‘inevitability of migration’ appears most pronounced. This analysis adds to recent and emerging work on the making of migrants even before they leave. We know that while this is, as our evidence shows, a deeply social and cultural process, it is also co-produced by the policies and narratives of formal state and non-state organisations (Rodriguez and Schwenken, 2013).

Related to this first point is how, despite current conditions of relative peace compared to a number of years ago (particularly in the case of Rolpa), out-migration rates from both places have remained high. We expect to see spikes in the number of people migrating around the time of violent and disruptive shocks, but it is often assumed that a return to stability means a return of the people. Our research shows that ‘the end’ of conflict and ‘the onset’ of peace is not necessarily associated with less migration. In fact, in both our case studies we see increases in migration flows after conflict. Structural factors – such as under-investment in local markets and the global demand for cheap, disposable labour – play an important part in driving migration across borders, as do socially embedded ideas about how livelihoods are made and through what means. But we might also look towards particular features of the post-conflict governance environment: in Nepal, for example, gestures of decentralisation have not been accompanied by actual transfers of decision-making power, and local people are largely cut off from the way in which state governance works (Asia Foundation, 2013). When formal development interventions are conspicuous largely by their absence, the disconnect between state and society means that recovery essentially becomes an autonomous process from the point of view of the household (although they may draw on wider social networks and connections). It is these kinds of deeper factors, which stretch far beyond the simple idea of a war–peace dichotomy, that construct migration as necessary and inevitable.



Households tend to spend remittances on food, other household items, schools fees and on improving the house

© Jessica Hagen-Zanker/SLRC

Second, the process of actually getting from one country to another comprises layers of formality and layers of informality. Official state migration channels exist, and attempts are made to formally outsource parts of the bureaucratic machinery around emigration to various non-state or quasi-state actors, but international migration from our case study areas largely still happens through personalised networks and connections. Furthermore, where regulations exist, these are often not enforced (see Jones and Basnett, 2013 on Nepal). In many cases, aspiring migrants manoeuvre their way through the process by using the highly priced services of highly questionable middlemen. On the one hand, the layers of informality – or at least the parts of the process that are essentially ungoverned by the state – offer a means of mobility, particularly to those whose access to the official channels is barred for whatever reason (often inadequate skills). But on the other hand, the fragmented and grey nature of the way in which the process is governed arguably creates new risks and vulnerabilities for those passing through the system.

Third, the migration process is characterised by exploitation at different stages – a finding that came out particularly strongly from the Rolpa case study. Our evidence suggests there is considerable potential for exploitation of migrants throughout the sending process – that is, not just at the place of destination, but even within domestic territory, before the individual has boarded the plane. Stories of agents (essentially migration brokers) ‘devouring’ money and providing misinformation to aspiring migrants appear quite common, particularly amongst Nepali migrants (although it would be inaccurate to claim this is a universal picture). In a number of cases, individuals are only told of flight times and work placement details a matter of hours before departure from Kathmandu. This has implications not only for their capacity to organise and get their affairs in order before leaving but also for their subjective wellbeing.

Importantly, the potential for exploitation within the migration process is not limited to the migrants themselves. The fact that many view overseas labour as the only way of making a decent living for their family (a particular kind of desperation), combined with the absence of state regulation at various points within the process, means that middlemen have the opportunity to take advantage of individuals and their families aspiring for international mobility. Furthermore, the system is set up in such a way that a large distance between employers and aspiring migrants is created, opening up further room for exploitation by middlemen (Jones and Basnett, 2013). Stark information asymmetries and a general lack of familiarity with how things work vis-à-vis documentation, fees and so on, become features that can be capitalised upon by those in a position to do so. As such, we find numerous cases of families taking out huge loans to finance fees for brokers and agents and other aspects of migration. In some instances, a failure to pay back the loan, perhaps because of ‘failed migrations’, has long-term impacts on household wellbeing more generally.

Fourth, as the majority of migrants in our case studies migrated to Gulf states, our study has added to the growing picture of the grim and often dangerous reality of working in the Gulf states, again characterised by highly exploitative relationships. Difficulties experienced by migrants include long working hours with few breaks, an unfamiliar culture, and difficult and often dangerous jobs. Furthermore in both case studies salary issues were a huge concern for migrants. At least one-third of our respondents had some kind of problem around payment

– these included remuneration not corresponding to the formal or informal terms of reference, not receiving the full wage, additional costs being taken out of the wage, delays in the payment, or not being paid at all. Our interviews speak of the constant struggles (few of which were successful) to rectify problems. While aspiring migrants often seem to be aware of the general risks or problems of working abroad, they seem to be unaware of specific risks and coping strategies. An interesting area for further research would be to analyse what sort of information is passed from current migrants to aspiring or new migrants and what is not.

Finally, it is abundantly clear from our research – and much other existing work – that migration produces wide-ranging effects beyond the material and financial. Again, these effects are felt not just by the migrants but also those they leave behind: family members and wider communities. Some studies have found negative effects on the subjective wellbeing of wives whose husbands spend years working overseas (e.g. Hoermann et al., 2010), but there is no single, homogenous story. Having an international migrant within the family can bring a certain status to that household, which potentially has further positive spillover effects on material variables, such as access to credit or local labour for agriculture (because of greater social capital). Stepping away from the question of whether each effect is positive or negative, and which outweighs the other, migration produces unavoidable social effects on family and community structures, leading to shifts and reversals in roles, responsibilities, power relations and decision-making. These changes can have tangible effects on household members staying behind, including on different family members’ workloads (with women in Rolpa often performing new roles that are socially stigmatised), on the educational access and attainment of children and finally, in KP, on the mobility of female household members. The temporality or permanence of these changes is not always clear, and it would be an interesting area for further research to explore.

8.1 Implications for policy makers

Perhaps most of all, the findings of this study speak to the (potential) importance of international labour migration as a way of making a living – particularly for those from difficult environments. As such, we draw out briefly below a number of policy implications for how governments and aid agencies can more effectively support the livelihoods of households in Rolpa, KP and similar crisis-affected areas.

First, invest in local employment and markets. We find that in post-conflict Rolpa and KP, households have few livelihood opportunities available to them and perceive little state presence. Migration for work – either internally or internationally – often appears to be the only option available to young people, yet in countless interviews respondents expressed their preference for working at home and for the state to create employment opportunities (e.g. the creation of cottage industries in Rolpa). While creating livelihood opportunities in areas of origin is neither easy nor fast, it is a necessary requirement for reducing reliance on migration.

Second, reduce the excess costs involved with migration. We find that access to (mostly informal) credit is high in both case studies. However, the costs of migration are large and often lead to high levels of indebtedness among migrant households. Failure to pay back these loans, perhaps because of failed migrations or exploitation by employers or brokers, can have long-term consequences on a migrant's 'left behind' family members. This highlights two key policy areas for attention: reducing the cost of migration and remittance-sending (see Hagen-Zanker, 2014a, for a review of policies on the latter); and tightening up the monitoring of the agencies and actors who shape the migration process (and as such determine the costs of migration).

Third, enforce the state regulatory acts already in place. Elaborating on the last issue, we see that in the case of Nepal, international labour migration is in theory regulated by a number of formal laws and processes. However, these existing laws are poorly enforced amongst other reasons due to corruption and political ties (Jones and Basnett, 2013). Better enforcement of existing laws is crucial, complemented by additional regulations that legalise and monitor informal agents.

Finally, reduce information asymmetries. There is a need for better dissemination of information about the process of migration, the rights of migrants at various stages of the process (including those in the country of origin for instance, related to agents) and the risks associated with migration. Interviews in both case studies showed that migrants only have a limited and superficial – if any – awareness of these issues. This information could be disseminated by local governments as part of the passport application process.

References



- Amnesty International (2013) *The dark side of migration: Spotlight on Qatar's construction sector ahead of the World Cup*. London: Amnesty International.
- Amnesty International (2014) *My sleep is my break: Exploitation of migrant domestic workers in Qatar*. London: Amnesty International.
- Adhikari, J. (2010) *Nepal Migration Year Book 2010*. Kathmandu: NCCR.
- Adhikari, J and Hobley, M. (2011) *Everyone is leaving – who will sow our fields? The effects of migration from Khotang District to the Gulf and Malaysia*. Kathmandu: Swiss Development Co-operation.
- Arif, G. (2009) *Recruitment of Pakistani workers for overseas employment: Mechanisms, exploitation and vulnerabilities*. Working Paper 64. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Asia Foundation (2013) *Political economy analysis of local governance in Nepal with special reference to education and health sectors*. Kathmandu: The Asia Foundation.
- Bettin, G., Lucchetti, R. and Zazzaro, A. (2009) *Income, consumption and remittances: evidence from immigrants to Australia*. MoFIR Working Paper 34. Ancona: Università Politecnica delle Marche.
- Bilgili, Ö. (2013) *The links between economic integration and remittances behaviour of migrants in the Netherlands*. UNU-MERIT Working Paper 2013-037. Maastricht: United Nations University, Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology.
- Bruslé, T. (2009-2010) 'Who's in a labour camp? A socio-economic analysis of Nepalese migrants in Qatar', *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, 35-36, 154-172.
- Bruslé, T. (2010) 'Living in and out of the host society. Aspects of Nepalese Migrants' Experience of Division in Qatar', *Qualitative Social Research* 11(2).
- Bruslé, T. (2012) 'What kind of place is this? Daily life, privacy and the inmate metaphor in a Nepalese workers' labour camp (Qatar)', *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 6: 1-59.
- Carr, E. (2013) 'Livelihoods as intimate government: reframing the logic of livelihoods for development', *Third World Quarterly* 34(1): 77-108.
- Castles, S. (2007) 'Twenty-first century migration as a challenge to sociology', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33(3): 351-71.
- Cavazos-Rehg, P.A., Zayas, L.H. and Spitznagel, E.L. (2007) 'Legal status, emotional well-being and subjective health status of Latino immigrants', *Journal of National Medical Association* 99: 1126-31.
- CBS and NPCS (Central Bureau of Statistics and National Planning Commission Secretariat) (2012) *National Living Standard Survey 2011/12*. Kathmandu: CBS and NPCS.
- Clemens, M. (2011) *Economics and emigration: Trillion-dollar bills on the sidewalk?* Working Paper 264. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- Clemens, M. and MacKenzie, D. (2014) *Why don't remittances appear to affect growth?* Working Paper 366. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- Clemens, M., Ozden, C. and Rapoport, H. (2014) *Migration and development research is moving far beyond remittances*. Working Paper 365. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.
- Cox-Edwards, A. and Ureta, M. (2003) International migration, remittances, and schooling: Evidence from El Salvador, *Journal of Development Economics* 72(2): 429-461.
- Donini, A., Sharma, J.R. and Aryal, S. (2013) *Structural violence and social suffering among marginal Nepali migrants*. Somerville: MA: Feinstein International Centre.
- DDC (District Development Committee) (2013) 'Yearly evaluation book of 2011/12' (in Nepali: aa. Ba. 2069/70 ko Barshik Samicha Pustika). Rolpa: Nepal: DDC Rolpa.
- De Haas, H. (2010) 'Migration and development: a theoretical perspective', *International Migration Review* 44: 1-38.
- Farooq, M. and Javed, Z.H. (2009) 'The impact of international migration on migrants' families left behind in the rural area of Pakistan', *Pakistan Journal of Agricultural Sciences* 46(4): 233-236.
- Frantz, E. (2014) *Breaking the isolation: Access to information and media among migrant domestic workers in Jordan and Lebanon*. New York: Open Society Foundation.
- Gartaula, H.N., Visser, L. and Niehof, A. (2012) 'Socio-cultural dispositions and wellbeing of the women left behind: A case of migrant households in Nepal', *Social Indicators Research* 108(3): 401-420.
- Gazdar, H. (2003) 'A review of migration issues in Pakistan', Paper presented at the Regional Conference on Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Choices in Asia, Dhaka.
- Geiser, U. and Suleri, A. (2010) 'Floods in Pakistan: Socio-political and 'techno-nature' challenges – a first glance'. Zurich: NCCR North-South.
- Ghimire S. (2011). Euphoria versus sufferings: Revolutionary Rolpa in post conflict context. *Nepal Journal of Social Science and Public Policy*. Vol 1(1). pp 101-114.
- Goss, J. and Lindquist, B. (1995) 'Conceptualizing international labour migration: A structuration perspective', *International Migration Review* 29: 317-351.
- Guichon, A. (2014) *Into the unknown: Exploitation of Nepalese migrant domestic workers in Lebanon*. London: Anti-Slavery International.
- Guilmoto, C.Z. and Sandron, F. (2001) 'The internal dynamics of migration networks in developing countries', *Population: An English Selection* 13(2): 135-164.
- Hagen-Zanker, J. (2014a) 'Potential products and policies to leverage productive use of migration and remittances: A rapid review of the literature for DFID Nepal'. EPS-PEAKS helpdesk paper.
- Hagen-Zanker, J. (2014b) 'Risks for migrants at the destination: Rapid review of the literature for DFID Nepal'. EPS-PEAKS helpdesk paper.
- Haider, M. and Badami, M. (2010) *Urbanization and Local Governance Challenges in Pakistan, Environment and Urbanization Asia*, vol. 1(1), pp. 81-86.
- Harris, J. and M. Todaro (1970) *Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-Sector Analysis*, *The American Economic Review*, 60 (1970): 126-142.
- Hoermann, B., Kollmair, M. and Banerjee, S. (2010) *Labour migration for development in the Western Hindu Kush-Himalayas: Understanding a livelihood strategy in the context of socioeconomic and environmental change*. Kathmandu: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.
- Hunzai, K. (2010) 'Labour migration and remittances in the mountains of Pakistan'. Case Study Report. Kathmandu: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.
- Jones, H. and Basnett, Y. (2013) *Foreign employment and inclusive growth in Nepal: What can be done to improve impacts for the people and the country?* London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Joshi, S., Simkhada, P. and Prescott, G.J. (2011) 'Health problems of Nepalese migrants working in three Gulf countries', *BMC international health and human rights* 11(3).
- Knight, J. and Gunatilaka, R. (2010) 'Great expectations? The subjective well-being of rural-urban migrants', *World Development* 38(1): 113-24.

Migration from the margins: mobility, vulnerability and inevitability in mid-western Nepal and north-western Pakistan

- Kothari, U. (2012) *Migration and chronic poverty*. Institute for Development Policy and Management, The University of Manchester.
- Levine, S. (2014) 'How to study livelihoods in fragile and conflict-affected situations'. Forthcoming Working Paper. London: Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium.
- Maher, S. (2009) *False promises: Migrant workers in the global garment industry*. Discussion Paper. Amsterdam: Clean Clothes Campaign.
- Maxwell, D. and Caldwell, R. (2008) 'The Coping Strategies Index: Field methods manual'. Washington, DC: CARE.
- McKenzie, D. and Rapoport, H. (2011) 'Can migration reduce educational attainment? Evidence from Mexico'. *Journal of Population Economics*, 24(4): 1331-1358.
- Ministry of Finance (2013) Pakistan Economic Survey 2012-2013 (www.finance.gov.pk/survey_1213.html).
- Monsutti, A. (2007) 'Migration as a rite of passage: Young Afghans building masculinity and adulthood in Iran', *Iranian Studies* 40(2): 167-185.
- NIDS, NCCR North-South and NCCR (2013) *Nepal migration yearbook 2012*. Kathmandu: Nepal Institute of Development Studies, NCCR North South and NCCR.
- Olimova, S., and Bosc, I. (2003) *Labour Migration from Tajikistan*. International Organisation for Migration in Cooperation with the Sharq Scientific Research Center. Dushanbe: IOM.
- Page, B. and Mercer, C. (2012) 'Why do people do stuff? Reconceptualizing remittance behaviour in diaspora-development research and policy', *Progress in Development Studies* 12(1): 1-18.
- PILDAT (2008) *Overseas Pakistani workers: significance and issues of migration*. Briefing paper no. 34. Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency.
- Pörtner, E., Junginger, M. and Müller-Böker, U. (2011) 'Migration in Far West Nepal: intergenerational linkages between internal and international migration of rural-to-urban migrants', *Critical Asian Studies* 43(1): 23-47.
- Rigg, J., Nguyen, T.A. and Huong Luong, T.T. (2014) 'The texture of livelihoods: migration and making a living in Hanoi', *Journal of Development Studies* 50(3): 368-82.
- Rodriguez, R.M. and Schwenken, H. (2013) 'Becoming a migrant at home: subjectivation processes in migrant-sending countries prior to departure', *Population, Space and Place* 19(4): 375-88.
- Samuels, F., Wagle, S., Sultana, T., Sultana, M.M., Kaur, N. and Chatterjee, S. (2012) 'Stories of harassment, violence and discrimination: migrant experiences between India, Nepal and Bangladesh'. Project briefing 70. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Shahbaz, B., Shah, Q.A., Suleri, A., Kazmi, M.A. and Commins, S. (2014) *Surveying livelihoods, service delivery and governance: Baseline evidence from Pakistan*. London: Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium.
- Sharma J. (2008) 'Practices of male labor migration from the hills of Nepal to India in development discourses. Which pathology?' *Gender, Technology and Development* 12(3): 303-323.
- Sharma, S. and Thapa, D. (2012) *Taken for granted: Nepali migration to India*. Working paper 3. Kathmandu: Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility.
- Siddiqui, T. (2008) 'Migration and gender in Asia'. Paper prepared for UN expert group meeting on international migration and development in Asia and the Pacific, 20-21 September, Bangkok.
- SOMO (2013) *Outsourcing labour. Migrant labour rights Malaysia's electronics industry*. Amsterdam: SOMO.
- Stillman, S., Gibson, J., McKenzie, D. and Rohorua, H. (2014) 'Miserable migrants? Natural experiment evidence on international migration and objective and subjective well-being', *World Development* [in press].
- Sumner, A. and Mallett, R. (2011) *Snakes and ladders, buffers and passports: rethinking poverty, vulnerability and wellbeing*. Working Paper 83. Brasilia: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
- Stark, O. (1991) *The migration of labour*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Taylor, Edward J. (1999) 'The new economics of labour migration and the role of remittances in the migration process', *International Migration* 37(1): 63-88.
- Taylor, J.E., Mora, J., Adams, R., and Lopez-Feldmann, A. (2005) Remittances, Inequality and Poverty: Evidence from Rural Mexico. A Paper Prepared for the American Agricultural Economics Association Annual Meeting, 24-27 July, Providence, RH.
- Thieme, S. and Ghimire, A. (2014) 'Making migrants visible in post-MDG debates', *Sustainability* 6(1): 399-415.
- THRD (Terai Human Rights Defenders) Alliance (2012) *Impact of Remittance in Madesh*. Kathmandu: THRD Alliance.
- UNDAF (2013) *District profile: Rolpa, Nepalgunj*: Field Coordination Office.
- Upreti, B.R., Upreti, P., Hagen-Zanker, J., KC, S. and Mallett, R. (2014) *Surveying livelihoods, service delivery and governance: baseline evidence from Nepal*. London: Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium.
- Valentin, K. (2012) 'The role of education in mobile livelihoods: social and geographical routes of young Nepalese migrants in India', *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 43(4): 429-442.
- Van Dijk, T. (2011) 'Livelihoods, capitals and livelihood trajectories: a more sociological conceptualisation', *Progress in Development Studies* 11(2): 101-17.
- Waddington, H. and Sabates-Wheeler, R. (2003) *How does poverty affect migration choice? A review of literature*. Working Paper T3. Brighton: Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty.
- World Bank (2011) *Large-scale migration and remittance in Nepal: Issues, challenges, and opportunities*. Report No. 55390-NP. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- IMF (2005) *World economic outlook: Globalization and external imbalances*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund.

Annexes

Annex I: Research questions

Overall research questions:

What is the role of international migration: i) in household livelihood recovery in post-conflict settings; and ii) as a determinant of state legitimacy in Nepal and Pakistan?

Sub-questions:

- a Who migrates and who doesn't? How does the experience of migration differ across different social categories – including male / female, age, ethnicity – as well as by levels of conflict-affectedness?
- b How do past or current conflict and other shocks affect the choice of migration as a livelihood strategy as opposed to other livelihood strategies?
- c What are the barriers and opportunities to migration and how does it vary across gender and other social constructs?
- d What are the complementary and alternative livelihood strategies to migration?
- e What are the impacts of migration on different dimensions of wellbeing and how is this mediated by past / current experiences of conflict? Does this differ between household members? How do they compare to the impacts from other livelihood strategies?
- f Do migration decisions and experiences affect perceptions of state legitimacy, and, if so, how? How does this relate to whether the migrant is male or female and experiencing / having experienced different levels of conflict?



Annex II: Overview of interviews conducted

Interviews conducted in Rolpa

Name of respondent	Location	Date of interview	Interview number
<i>IDs</i>			
B (son of migrant and non-aspiring migrant)	Liwang	27 December 2013	IDI-N-1
Y. (left behind mother)	Budagaon	1 January 2014	IDI-N-2
D. (left behind mother)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	IDI-N-3
M. (left behind spouse)	Budagaon	30 December 2013	IDI-N-4
R. (left behind spouse)	Budagaon	30 December 2013	IDI-N-5
N. and B. (non-aspiring migrants)	Liwang	28 December 2013	IDI-N-6
M. (aspiring migrant)	Budagaon	30 December 2013	IDI-N-7
K. (non-aspiring migrant)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	IDI-N-8
K. (aspiring migrant)	Budagaon	30 December 2013	IDI-N-9
K. (left behind mother)	Budagaon	29 December 2013	IDI-N-10
C. (left behind mother)	Liwang	23 October 2013	IDI-N-11
S. (left behind wife)	Liwang	23 October 2013	IDI-N-12
D. (left behind brother)	Liwang	23 October 2013	IDI-N-13
D. (left behind wife)	Liwang	23 October 2013	IDI-N-14
C. (left behind wife)	Liwang	24 October 2013	IDI-N-15
H. (non-aspiring migrant)	Liwang	24 October 2013	IDI-N-15
M. (return migrant)	Liwang	29 December 2013	IDI-N-16
M. (non-aspiring migrant)	Liwang	24 October 2013	IDI-N-17
C. (aspiring migrant)	Liwang	23 October 2013	IDI-N-18
P. (return migrant)	Liwang	23 October 2013	IDI-N-19
R. and L. (return migrants)	Liwang	23 October 2013	IDI-N-20
N. (migrant on holiday)	Liwang	24 October 2013	IDI-N-21
D. (return migrant)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	IDI-N-22
A. (return migrant)	Liwang	27 December	IDI-N-23
K. (father left behind)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	IDI-N-24
H. (adolescent son left behind)	Budagaon	01 January 2014	IDI-N-25
S. (aspiring migrant)	Budagaon	01 January 2014	IDI-N-26
R. (return migrant)	Liwang	27 December 2013	IDI-N-27

Annexes

C. (mother left behind)	Budagaon	01 January 2014	IDI-N-28
N. (return migrant)	Liwang	01 January 2014	IDI-N-29
M., Migrant returnee	Budagaon	29 December 2013	IDI-N-30
B., Migrant returnee female			
FGDs			
3 female participants (left behind wives of migrant)	Budagaon	30 December 2013	FGD-N-1
5 female participants (Older adolescent girls- non aspiring migrants)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	FGD-N-2
5 female participants (non –aspiring migrants/ left behind females and one returnee- wives and mothers)	Liwang	27 December 2013	FGD-N-3
4 female participants (wives of migrants left behind)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	FGD-N-4
4 male participants (return migrants)	Budagaon	01 January 2014	FGD-N-5
6 male participants (adolescent boys)	Budagaon	01 January 2014	FGD-N-6
KIIs			
Nawin Buda (local leader of Maoist party and non-aspiring migrant)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	KII-N-1
Bal Krishna Acharya (Cottage and small scale industry officer)	Liwang	22 October 2013	KII-N-2
Hiralal Regmi (Local Development Officer)	Liwang	22 October 2013	KII-N-3
Anita Adhikari (Women Development Officer)	Liwang	22 October 2013	KII-N-4
Mahadev Panta (Chief district Officer)	Liwang	22 October 2013	KII-N-5
Life histories			
G. (return migrant)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	LH-N-1
B. (returnee migrant; father) & N. (current migrant; son)	Liwang	24 October 2013	LH-N-2
C. (wife of migrant returnee)	Liwang	27 December 2013	LH-N-4
P. (left behind father/mother and brother)	Budagaon	31 December 2013	LH-N-5
K. (left behind mother)	Liwang	27 December 2013	LH-N-6
P. (return migrant)	Liwang	27 December 2013	LH-N-7
L. (Return Migrant)	Budagaon	29 December 2013	LH-N-8



D. (never migrated)	Budagaon	29 December 2013	LH-N-9
<i>Community mappings</i>			
Community mapping in urban area	Liwang	29 December 2013	CM-N-1
16 male/ 8 female participants	Liwang	29 December 2013	CM-N-1
Community mapping in rural area	Budagaon	02 January 2014	CM-N-2
12 male/ 3 female participants			

Annexes

List of interviews conducted in KP

Name of respondent	Location	Date of interview	Interview number
IDs			
A. (Aspiring Migrant)	Barabakhel	3 October 2013	IDI-P-1
A. (Current Migrant)	Barabakhel	3 October 2013	IDI-P -2
G. (Aspirant Migrant)	Barabakhel	3 October 2013	IDI-P -3
G. (Return Migrant)	Barabakhel	3 October 2013	IDI-P -4
M. (Left Behind)	Barabakhel	4 October 2013	IDI-P -5
S. (Current Migrant)	Barabakhel	4 October 2013	IDI-P -6
S. (Left Behind)	Barabakhel	4 October 2013	IDI-P -7
S. (Return Migrant)	Barabakhel	7 October 2013	IDI-P -8
J. (Return Migrant)	Barabakhel	7 October 2013	IDI-P -9
R. (Return Migrant)	Barabakhel	7 October 2013	IDI-P -10
K. (Left Behind)	Barabakhel	7 October 2013	IDI-P-11
U. (Left Behind)	Kala Dag	9 October 2013	IDI-P -12
U. (Current Migrant)	Kala Dag	9 October 2013	IDI-P -13
W. (Return Migrant)	Kala Dag	9 October 2013	IDI-P -14
S. (Left Behind)	Kamar Kotkay	14 October 2013	IDI-P -15
A. (Current Migrant)	Kamar Lotkay	14 October 2013	IDI-P -16
B. (Left Behind)	Sersenai	14 October 2013	IDI-P -17
S. (Left Behind)	Sersenai	14 October 2013	IDI-P -18
A. (Left Behind)	Shair Khaney	24 October 2013	IDI-P -19
B. (Left Behind)	Shair Khaney	16 October 2013	IDI-P -20
F. (Aspirant Migrant)	Shair Khaney	16 October 2013	IDI-P -21
H. Zahid (Left Behind)	Shair Khaney	16 October 2013	IDI-P -22
M. (Return Migrant)	Shair Khaney	16 October 2013	IDI-P -23
W. (Aspirant Migrant)	Shair Khaney	16 October 2013	IDI-P -24
FGDs			
Migrants Spouses (7 participants)	Hayaserai	21 October 2013	FGD--P -1
Migrants (5 current, 2 left behind, 2 aspirant migrants)	Kabal	21 October 2013	FGD--P -2
Aspirant Migrants (Four participants)	Kala Dag	22 October 2013	FGD--P -3
Aspirant Migrants (Six participants)	Kala Dag	22 October 2013	FGD--P -4
Migrants Spouses (Seven participants)	Sersenai	23 October 2013	FGD-N-5



Aspirant Migrants (Seven participants)	Sersenai	23 October 2013	FGD--P -6
Migrants (Two return migrants, two left behinds, one current migrant)	Hayaserai	23 October 2013	FGD--P -7
KIIs			
Assistant Director passports	Swat	10 October 2013	KII--P -1
Overseas Employment Promoters	Swat	10 October 2013	KII--P -2
Sahar Ali (Recruitment and travel agent)	Timergara	15 October 2013	KII--P -3
Ex Naib Nazim	Hayaserai	10 October 2013	KII--P -4
Managing Director Overseas Employment Corporation	Islamabad	22 January 2014	KII--P -5
Joint Secretary Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development	Islamabad	28 January 2014	KII--P -6
Director Overseas Employment Promoters	Islamabad	27 January 2014	KII--P -7
Life Histories			
A. (Non migrant)	Hayaserai	27 October 2013	LH--P -1
A. (Migrant)	Hayaserai	27 October 2013	LH--P -2
J. (Return migrant; mother)	Sersenai	27 October 2013	LH--P -3
H. (Return migrant)	Barabakhel	28 October 2013	LH--P -4
S. (Return migrant)	Barabakhel	28 October 2013	LH--P -5
A. (Return migrant; mother)	Sherkhanai	28 October 2013	LH--P -6
Community Mappings			
Community mapping in urban area (Six participants)	Barabakhel	2 October 2013	CM--P -1
Community mapping in rural area (Seven participants)non-migrants).	Sherkhanay	2 October 2013	CM--P -2

According to Comprehensive Development Strategy of KP 2010, KP province



SLRC reports present information, analysis and key policy recommendations on issues relating to livelihoods, basic services and social protection in conflict affected situations. This and other SLRC reports are available from www.securelivelihoods.org. Funded by DFID, Irish Aid and EC.

The views presented in this paper are those of the author(s) and not necessarily the views of SLRC, DFID, Irish Aid and EC. ©SLRC 2014.

Readers are encouraged to quote or reproduce material from SLRC for their own publications. As copyright holder SLRC, requests due acknowledgement and a copy of the publication.

Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium
Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 7922 8249
F +44 (0)20 7922 0399
E slrc@odi.org.uk
www.securelivelihoods.org

