



Transatlantic dialogues on migration and development issues: the Mexico-US and Morocco-EU experiences

Study-tour in Zacatecas, Mexico

March 16-20, 2009

Report¹

¹ This report has been compiled by Simona Vezzoli at the International Migration Institute with the support of the participants in the study-tour, in particular of Prof Mohamed Berriane and Prof Raúl Delgado Wise. We are indebted to the rapporteurs, Jörg Helmke and Oscar Castillo, who took excellent notes during the workshop sessions.

Table of Contents

Part I.....	2
Introduction	2
Programme activities	3
Evaluation	6
Part II.....	7
Migration and development: questioning the core principles.....	7
Migration in the Morocco-EU and Mexico-US systems.....	9
Changing migration trends	9
Migration as a force of transformation	10
Migrants’ development initiatives: insights from the Mexican experience.....	12
Informing migration and development policies with on-the-ground evidence.....	14
Expanding the migration and development research agenda	17
Conclusions and the way forward	18
Appendix 1 - Study-tour Programme.....	20
Appendix 2 - List of participants	23

Part I

Introduction

From 16 to 20 March 2009 the International Migration Institute (IMI) of the James Martin 21st Century School at the University of Oxford, in partnership with the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, Mexico and the research team of Region and Regionalisation (E3R) of the University Mohamed V – Agdal in Rabat, Morocco, organised its first comparative study-tour on migration and development. The event was the key component of the project ‘Transatlantic dialogues on migration and development issues’ funded by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, which aims to spark a dialogue on migration and development in theory and practice based on a systematic comparison of the Moroccan and Mexican cases.

The study-tour was designed to draw a comparison between the migration systems of Mexico with the United States and Morocco with the European Union. The event aimed to provide the opportunity for a ‘reality check’ on the impact of migration on development through planned visits to communities with high emigration rates, and areas that have experienced return migration and benefited from migrants’ expenditure and investment in local development to varying extents. For this reason, the event was held in Zacatecas, the state with the highest intensity of out-migration in Mexico and the place of origin of the *tres por uno* programme, an initiative that merges governmental and migrant resources to support infrastructural development.

The participants were researchers, policy-makers and civil society representatives from Mexico, the United States, Morocco and the European Union. They were selected on the basis of their experience with migration and development either through research, involvement in migration policy or direct

contact with migrants, migrants' associations and development initiatives. In addition, eligibility criteria included: 1) the ability and willingness of participants to expand their knowledge-base and challenge their assumptions; and 2) their capacity to use the lessons learned from this experience to inform their work.

The five-day event brought together 19 participants from Mexico, Morocco, the United States and the European Union. This included 10 researchers, 4 policy-makers and policy-advisors, and 5 representatives of civil society, development agencies and international organisations. In addition, Hilda Dávila, the Deputy Directory General of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (*Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior IME*), joined the event on its third day to provide the institutional perspective of a Mexican governmental organisation.

Programme activities

Through the study-tour in Zacatecas, the IMI set out to promote a dialogue that a) merged academic research, policy and grassroots perspectives on migration and development and also b) offered a different format that would bring together traditional seminar activities with research-specific fieldwork sessions. In preparation for this event, the IMI wrote a comparative paper that analysed the Mexican and Moroccan migration trends taking into account these countries' historical, geopolitical and socio-economic characteristics. In addition, a policy brief was prepared to summarise the main factors explaining the persistence of migration as well as its varying impact on development in Mexico and Morocco.

The first day of the study-tour was dedicated to giving the participants an overview of the initiative, its organization, objectives and expected outcomes. The organisers and the participants provided background information on the trends of the Morocco-EU and the Mexico-US migration systems. These presentations gave the participants, who are specialists in either the Morocco-EU or Mexico-US migration system, the opportunity to learn in greater detail about the migration system less familiar to them and to begin formulating a comparison of their similarities and differences. The information gathered during the first day provided a basis for comparison that would be developed during the field trips of the following days.

The field visits started on the second day of the study-tour with an excursion to Juchipila, a community located approximately 190 km south-west of the city of Zacatecas. The group of participants first visited Juchipilo, a mezcal² factory founded by a group of retired local teachers with



The group visits the mezcal factory Juchipilo

² Mezcal is an alcoholic beverage that is very similar to tequila in the method of production, but that is produced from different varieties of agave. Tequila is made only from blue agave. In addition, tequila is a patented product that is tied to the Mexican state of Jalisco. Producers of mezcal, which can also be made from blue agave, cannot call their product tequila so as to avoid any patent-infringement. Because mezcal is largely unknown outside of Mexico, local producers must create a market for their product if they want to sell onto the international market. The competition, however, is stiff, particularly considering that international corporations, and not Mexican producers, run the distribution of tequila worldwide.

the support of migrants' funds. The factory provided an example of migrants' remittances that are channelled into for-profit investments, which are managed by the local community. This visit was followed by a tour of the community of El Remolino, a village of 600-700 inhabitants that has a long history of migration to the United States. In El Remolino emigration started in the 1920s when a small group of individuals migrated to California to pick cotton. The flow of migrants has expanded, since then, and today almost every household in this community has family members who are migrants in the United States. In this community, migrants have been very active in promoting philanthropic initiatives and there are several migrants' associations (*clubes*) that finance *tres por uno* programmes for the renovation of public infrastructure (i.e. roads, school, church, clinic). The day ended with a visit to Amoxochitl, a small community in the municipality of Juchipila that has been severely affected by depopulation. Amoxochitl is a community of only 50 households, among which there are only a couple of young families with children. The remainder of the inhabitants are elderly people, many return migrants from the United States whose adult children have also emigrated to the United States. This visit provided a unique opportunity to have an informal conversation with elderly members of this community and to gain an initial exposure to the local understanding of migration, development and the external forces that affect the everyday lives of the local population.



The main square of Amoxochitl, a rural community that is experiencing depopulation

On Wednesday, the third day of the event, the workshop started with a presentation by Hilda Dávila, the Deputy Directory General of the Institute of Mexicans Abroad (*Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior IME*) and a presentation by Dr. Abderrahmane Zahi, the Secretary General of the Foundation Hassan II for Moroccans Abroad (*Fondation Hassan II pour les Marocains Résidents à l'Etranger*). The day continued with a visit to the Center for the Rights of the Migrant (*Centro de los Derechos del Migrante*), a local non-governmental organisation with outreach at the national level. The participants were introduced to the activities of the centre, which include the education of migrants on their legal rights, legal aid to provide migrants with access to justice, collaborative work with U.S lawyers to bring forth collective cases (i.e. class action cases), outreach activities to assist migrants whose rights have been violated in the United States and bridging activities with other organisations and Mexican government agencies to bring justice to migrants in the United States.

A visit to the State Institute for Migrants followed (*Instituto Estatal de Migración*). This governmental agency of the state of Zacatecas is active in the creation of migration policy and is involved in the protection of migrants' human rights and in specific cases that require legal assistance across the border – e.g. custody battles that involve Zacatecans abroad, identification of casualties at the border through DNA testing. The Institute is also responsible for organising events for Zacatecan hometown associations in the United States so as to foster transnational relations.

The fourth day of the study-tour was dedicated to an excursion to the city of Jerez and two of its surrounding communities, Los Haro and El Cargadero. Emigration trends have been studied at length in the city of Jerez and its neighbouring communities, particularly its links to the Napa Valley in California, where many of the migrants from Jerez have been employed in agricultural production. The group visited the small agricultural enterprise of a return migrant who worked in California for

16 years. His enterprise produces organic peaches, plums and cacti using the techniques and the equipment that he acquired over the years as a migrant worker in California. Once border controls tightened and it became unfeasible for him to make the journey over the border as an undocumented migrant, he decided to apply the skills he learned while working on farms in Napa Valley to start an agricultural enterprise of his own in Los Haro. This return migrant's objective is to have a productive agricultural enterprise that can support his family and that can provide an example of the possibilities, other than migration, that can be pursued in Jerez. This small enterprise currently provides work to five households and occasionally the enterprise must hire temporary workers.



The main square of El Cargadero, built with migrants' funds through the *tres por uno* programme

The visit to the second community of El Cargadero provided the opportunity to see additional infrastructural project funded by the *tres por uno* programme and to become acquainted with another migrant and his family. This individual migrated to the U.S. for a few months and he soon realised that life in the U.S. did not suit him. He returned to Jerez, where he has been committed to take advantage of the opportunities and knowledge available locally. He has started a small tortilla factory in El Cargadero that he runs using traditional techniques that enhance the properties of corn and the taste of the tortillas. The tortilla factory is a family enterprise, which was undergoing remodelling during our visit. This visit brought to light that, despite his entrepreneurial spirit, this

entrepreneur is confronted by an obstacle that no business training or migrant investment can solve: a declining community that is not re-inventing itself because community members repeatedly resort to emigration to the United States.

The fifth and final day of the event was dedicated to discussions based on the initial presentations and the field visits. The day opened with observations on Mexican migration and development from the perspectives of the Moroccan participants. The following session focused on the relations between migration and development policy, the real potentials and obstacles witnessed in the visited areas, and the opportunities for improvements. The event concluded with a discussion that covered three areas:

- 1) suggestions to improve migration policies of destination countries from a Southern perspective;
- 2) suggestions of civil society representatives and policy-makers for future empirical research;
- 3) suggestions for a research agenda on migration and development. The following sections highlight the main findings of the study-tour.

The discussions held throughout the event touched upon several topics of importance in the migration and development debate. The very principles of migration and development were put into question as participants discussed the different dimensions of development and the presumed role of migrants and remittances as development factors. Migration was also analysed both as a phenomenon that is constantly undergoing transformation, but also as a factor that affects social and economic transformation in countries of origin, transit and destination and upon the individuals and communities involved. The group used the observations from the Mexican experience to discuss the role and the impact of collective remittance initiatives and the development efforts of individual

migrants. In the final discussion, the participants made concrete suggestions for the promotion of policies that are more considerate of the migrants' experience and that try to maximise the benefits for all stakeholders. Finally, concrete suggestions were made for a research agenda, highlighting the benefit of comparative research and launching possible ideas for future research starting from the Mexican and Moroccan experiences. Part II of this report presents the most important points discussed and the outcomes of the discussions.

Evaluation

The study-tour was an experimental effort to bring together migration and development specialists from different sectors (academics, policy, NGOs) and expose them not only to classic lectures and case studies, but to provide direct exposure of specific migration and development 'realities' as experienced in specific communities in Zacatecas. The visits provided the opportunity for participants to challenge some of their previously held notions about migration and development. The comparative aspect of the study-tour made these observations more apparent, particularly for those participants who were less familiar with the Mexican context.

An evaluation conducted after the study-tour indicated that the majority of participants benefited from the combination of lecture-style presentations and first-hand observations through field visits. The participants particularly appreciated the opportunity to complement the information traditionally gathered through secondary sources with direct contact with migrants who discussed the opportunities that migration has opened for them and their families, but also presented the difficulties they experience in the origin communities. The participants also found it beneficial to confront their ideas on migration and development with individuals who work in different sectors of migration. This exchange provided an opportunity for participants to compare the broad range of migration interests and to appreciate the difficulty in merging such different needs into comprehensive policies.

The positive outcomes of this first study-tour have encouraged the International Migration Institute to organise a second study-tour in Morocco in 2010. Based largely on the same comparative idea, the second study-tour will attempt to focus on some specific areas of interest, such as the Mexican *tres por uno* programme and its applicability to economic development and to the Moroccan context. In addition, the IMI will attempt to further research in the impact of diaspora engagement in development, with a focus on the outcomes of existing migration and development initiatives and present results to the participants of the 2010 Morocco study-tour. In addition, the IMI plans to disseminate results to migrants, their associations and policy-makers, who can benefit from new research results based on empirical studies.

Part II

The second part of this report offers a summary of the main points that emerged during the discussions held through the study-tour. The ideas have been organised in five general topics: questioning migration and development, migration in the Mexico-US and Morocco-US systems, Mexican evidence of the impact of migrant initiatives, migration and development policy and migration and development research agenda. This summary attempts only to highlight the key points and themes of the discussion. It does not claim to represent all the views of the individual participants who were present during the discussions.

Migration and development: questioning the core principles

The migration and development debate has largely developed with a northern perspective and an emphasis on the notion that migration could be significantly and rapidly reduced if the origin countries reached a level of development comparable to the standards of developed countries. Within this frame of reference, migrants themselves become ideal agents for development, not only because of their on-the-ground knowledge of their origin communities, but also because they possess social, professional and financial remittances that can be (often very willingly) invested for the common good of their origin community. The underlying but unspoken principles of the debate are that development in the global South is a pathway to manage migration and that migrants can play an important role in containing migration flows, possibly even leading to their own return to the origin community, once its socio-economic development has reached acceptable levels.

This approach shifts some of the responsibility for development away from national governments towards individual migrants, who become an integral part of a highly-opportunistic development strategy. This approach is highly questionable, given the limited empirical evidence on the impact of migration on development as well as migrants' collective development initiatives and co-development projects. In fact, the evidence gathered to date is mixed, with diverging results when considering the various geopolitical levels (i.e. the national, regional and local entities), the political factors and policies facilitating or restraining migration (i.e. liberal trade policies enforced at the same time as border controls are tightened) and when considering migration within a temporal dimension. Overall, the politically-induced discourse on migration and development and the search for quick policy answers have not allowed room for the heterogeneity and complexity of migration and an accurate analysis of its impacts on the development of the areas of origin.

When inquiring about migration and development, it is essential to acknowledge that there are different dimensions of development. Common definitions of development have largely focused on the economic development of, particularly, rural areas, rather than human development and the improved wellbeing of individual, households and communities. This spatial focus has generated, over the years since colonial times, a focus on the desirability of sedentary behaviour and the need to control mobility (from rural to urban environments previously and from developing to developed countries in the current debate). Yet the ability of humans to be mobile and to adapt to new environments is an integral part of the progress experienced throughout human history. In fact, limiting mobility can be a detriment to development.

Furthermore, when involving migrants as agents of development, the migrants' own understanding of development must be considered. Evidence shows that development at the national level does not necessarily imply that poverty is reduced or that households are more capable of improving their capabilities, while development at the local and household level does not automatically appear in the national economic statistics. When we introduce another dimension, in this case migrants, it is essential to understand the migrants' development objectives as their goals might be different from those set by scholars or development practitioners.

The initiatives that have been promoted within the migration and development framework have produced many effects that are visible in both the Mexico-US and the Morocco-EU migration systems, but which are not unique to these two systems.



The church of the community of El Remolino, renovated with migrants' funds through the *tres por uno* programme

Firstly, there is a tendency of both the Moroccan and Mexican governments to rely heavily on remittances rather than developing alternative development strategies. Particularly, there is a void in the delivery of concrete policies that provide clear guidelines and assign responsibility for development. The work carried out by hometown and migrant associations is often the only development effort visible in rural areas and although their work is very valuable for local development, there is often a gap between the migrants' intentions, who sometimes contribute for sentimental reasons, and the 'real' needs perceived by those continuing to live in these communities.

Globally, the migration and development debate has taken for granted that migrants can be entrepreneurs. Although some migrants might be able to learn business skills and become successful entrepreneurs, many migrants do not have an entrepreneurial mind-set or simply do not wish to set up enterprises, similar to many individuals among non-migrant populations. Moreover, the mere fact that many migrants are from rural communities does not mean that their investments will automatically occur in rural areas. In fact, it may be harder to establish profitable enterprises in rural areas and migrants with an entrepreneurial spirit are more likely to invest in urban areas, as already suggested by empirical evidence.

Lastly, the migration and development debate has assigned migrants a double identity. At once they are seen and are treated as the bottom of the socio-economic ladder in the destination countries, yet they are upheld as an elite and the main resource for the future development of their origin communities. Migrants are often treated as a factor (production, integration, population stabiliser, etc.) rather than as individuals who have life objectives and who are trying to maximise their capabilities to reach goals for themselves and their families. Programmes that encourage migrants' participation in local development should therefore be more sensitive to the migrants' individual needs, their difficulties and the impact of these identity shifts on their lives.

These critical observations are not meant to dismiss the utility of migration and development, but to highlight the need for more refined research that investigates how migration and remittances of all

types affect the development process in origin areas, how the specific contexts of sending areas can explain heterogeneous migration impacts on development, how migration and development is experienced by the local communities and how it affects their aspirations and promotes changes to their livelihoods.

Migration in the Morocco-EU and Mexico-US systems

Despite having significantly different histories and cultures, Mexico and Morocco share a similar migration history that spans over a century. This common history is strongly influenced by the countries' location on the Southern edge of the global South-North border and by the specific political and economic relations this geographical location entails. By bringing together migration experts with a different perspective and geographical focus, the participants in the event were able to examine the more noticeable patterns of migration and recognize more subtle trends affecting migrants, their families and origin communities and, more generally, their countries of origin. The observations are presented in this section grouped by the two following criteria: migration is in continuous transformation, often due to pressure of exogenous forces; at the same time, migration is itself a force of transformation.

Changing migration trends

Over the last century the relations between Mexico and the United States and Morocco and the European Union nations have been characterised by the constant mobility of people, but these movements have been **undergoing continuous transformation**. These are some of the patterns observed:

- **Adaptable migration strategy:** migration from Mexico and Morocco has largely progressed from migration of young low-skilled males, who migrated on their own to earn wages and send remittances to their families in the origin country, to family reunification and settlement in destination countries prompted by stricter migration policies in the North.
 - The migration systems of Mexico and Morocco were driven by the function of these countries' as **labour exporters**. The implementation of 'guestworker' programmes formalised pre-existing flows of low-skilled migrant workers, who migrated to the factories, mines and agricultural areas of the US and the EU. Today migration flows are more complex and work is no longer the exclusive motive to emigrate. However, Mexican experts suggest that labour demand is still the main driving force of Mexican migration. The export of labour model has been adopted by the Mexican national government as a strategy toward development, mainly driven by the desire to increase remittances. As one participant noted, the intense outmigration experienced and level of remittances (9.5% of the state GDP) makes the state of Zacatecas a 'migrant factory'. This approach does little to promote the economic development of Mexico, while it seems to serve the economic interests of the United States, by reducing costs of production factors, but also social costs (i.e. education), and making the greatest profits from the import of low-wage, low-skill and often undocumented workers.

- Since the termination of the ‘guestworker’ programmes, **stricter entry rules** have regulated the access of low-skilled migrant workers to the labour markets in the US and the EU. These have led migrants to **reduce circular movement** and rather pursue **family reunification and settlement** in the US and the EU. However, migrant workers have been able to continue migrating irregularly, filling the ranks of **undocumented migrants** working in poor conditions in the informal sector.
 - More recently, particularly since 2001, **stricter border controls** have put even greater obstacles to the circulation of migrants who have, once again, resorted to **permanent settlement**, breaking the historical patterns of migration typical of the Mexico-US system and of significant importance in the Moroccan-EU migration system.
- **Diversification of migrant types:** as stated previously, most migrant workers from Mexico and Morocco used to be young, single males with low levels of education, who could fill menial jobs in factories, mines and agricultural fields. During the family reunification phase, new arrivals included the migrant workers’ families, mainly their spouses and children. Since then the background of migrants has diversified and include younger people (e.g. children of migrants, but also unaccompanied minors), women of all ages (e.g. spouses of existing migrants or women migrating independently) and educated individuals (e.g. pursuing advanced studies or seeking high-skilled jobs).
 - More recently both migration systems present a **diversification of areas of origin and destination**. International migration is pursued by individuals coming from disparate locations in Mexico and Morocco, indicating the expansion of the migration networks that operate among migrant communities. For more on this, see the comparative background paper prepared by IMI researchers.
 - The growing flows of migrants from the South (i.e. sub-Saharan Africa, Central and Latin America) have gradually led to the transformation of Morocco and Mexico from purely **emigration to transit and immigration countries**, as increasing numbers of migrants from the South who fail, do not aim or do not venture to move further north opt to remain in Mexico and Morocco. See the IMI’s comparative paper for additional information.
 - The **militarisation and securitisation of the borders** have compelled migrants from Mexico and Morocco as well as ‘transit migrants’ to cross borders irregularly, endangering their lives and forcing migrants to live in unsafe conditions which make them subject to exploitation during the northbound passage and once in the destination country.
 - International migration has caused internal migration from rural to more urban environments because many migrants invest in urban areas and return migrants often settle in towns. Also remittance-driven economic growth and employment creation draws in rural-urban migrants and may in this way reinforce existing urbanisation trends.

Migration as a force of transformation

Migration is itself a **force of transformation**, as migrants affect the communities in which they transit and settle and they interact with their origin communities as they send remittances, return and

become involved in investment and development initiatives. For over fifty years researchers in Morocco and Mexico have aimed to understand the extent to which migration can be a transformative force.

In Morocco, the investigation of the effects of migration onto development started in the 1960s with a focus on education, standards of living and gender issues. Overall, migration has impacts at the individual, family, community, but effects can also be seen at the national level. Increased mobility has led to changes in the origin communities – for instance, consumption patterns have changed, returning migrants and their behaviour alters concepts of leisure time. The changes promoted by Moroccan migration, however, are not uniform but vary depending on the phases of migration.

Migration research has a long history in Mexico as well and even in this case migration has been a force of transformation for individuals, their families and their communities. Some negative changes seem to have originated from the strong dependency of Mexico on the capitalist system of the United States, which might have produced increasing inequalities and mixed impact of migration on development, but even in Mexico the effects of migration on origin communities are varied.

Following are a few of the migration-led impacts that characterise the two migration systems in question:

- **Moroccan migrants' associations** and **Mexican Hometown Associations (HTAs)** have been created and sustained by migrants in the EU and the US. Such organisations are often, but not always or exclusively, actively engaged in the promotion of development in origin communities. Migrant associations are recognised for helping to promote creative ideas, channel resources in times of need (i.e. the 2004 earthquake in northeastern Morocco) and for being a positive force in creating partnerships with governmental and non-governmental agencies, and with non-migrants in origin and destination countries. The *tres por uno* programme, which has its roots in Zacatecas in the 1960s-70s as an initiative to engage HTAs in development, was created a simple one-to-one matching system that saw the government match each dollar donated by migrants' associations (for more information see the comparative paper). Some non-governmental organisations that engage migrants as agents for development, such as *Migration et Développement*, focus their efforts to jumpstart change at the grassroots level by concentrating their activities in regions where the government has not promoted any development.
- Migration can introduce changes that could have negative long-term effects. For instance, the initiatives promoted by migrants' association might remove governments' pressure to promote development, deliver services and it might even delay the introduction of appropriate development strategies and public policy by the national government. In fact, although migration and development programmes paint migrants in a positive light, these initiatives have enabled all levels of government to **shift responsibility for the development of basic infrastructure to migrants**, who are expected to act as development agents.
- The philanthropic initiatives of migrants' associations are important but do not typically involve **entrepreneurial forms of investments**, which, for instance, are not supported by the *tres por uno* programme and by many of the projects of Moroccan migrants' associations. Entrepreneurial activities are often initiated independently by migrants and returning

migrants, who are dedicated and willing to take a risk to invest. However, observations in Los Haros and El Cargadero highlighted that the risk taken by migrants is often higher than the risks typically associated with entrepreneurship in developed countries. In fact, the business environment required for successful enterprises is often not there (i.e. lack of credit, support in business planning and marketing for new entrepreneurs, corruption), making the viability of enterprises highly questionable and the expected profits low. Despite the high remittance level both in Mexico and in Morocco, there is a gap between savings facilitated by remittance flows, and the availability of credit. As a result of the weak development of credit markets and a generally unfavourable investment environment, entrepreneurial investment levels remains overall weak, and investments are mainly concentrated in housing projects and focused in the urban centres rather than in the rural communities of origin.

- The infrastructural projects promoted by migrant associations can indeed bring better services to local communities, but overall they have a **limited impact on economic development**. However, it is important to note that without the activities of migrants' associations, these same areas could be in even worse conditions, as the initiatives promoted have multiplier effects in the local economy.
- A transformative event that could increasingly affect local communities is the **return of elderly labour migrants**, which might increase as the effects of global financial crisis play out in the northern countries. The flow of these migrants at retirement age could present a challenge for countries of origin that are not prepared to face the potential health and financial costs that this population would require.

Migrants' development initiatives: insights from the Mexican experience

During the field visits, participants offered a variety of observations which brought greater understanding of various aspects of migration. Most of the observations would often revert back to a few specific points that are largely applicable to both Mexico and Morocco.

The participants generally agreed that one of the limitations in understanding the value of migrants' initiatives is the general lack of suitable evaluations of these projects based on empirical evidence. As an opening to further investigate migrants' initiatives and evaluate their development impact, it was suggested to subdivide **migrants' initiatives** into **private** or **collective**. This differentiation is relevant for the following reasons:

- **Aim of the initiative: Private migrant initiatives** aim to be **profitable** and are promoted by:
 - return migrants who decide to invest in an entrepreneurial activity, such as the family enterprise to produce organic fruits and the tortilla factory;



Agricultural enterprise that was started by a return migrant and that produces organic plums and peaches in the community of Los Haro

- by members of the local community who initiate an entrepreneurial activity with the contribution of migrants' funds, such as the mezcal factory in Juchipila.

On the other hand, **collective migrant initiatives** are of a **charitable** nature, consisting mainly of infrastructural improvements. The many *tres por uno* initiatives observed throughout the state of Zacatecas belong to this category. Their purpose ranged from remodelling churches and building schools to paving roads and constructing *plazas* for the local community. These initiatives often have an **emotional value** for the migrants.

- **Financial support: Collective initiatives** can benefit from the **government's financial support**, either directly in the form of matching contributions, such as the *tres por uno* programme, or indirectly through the co-financing of rural infrastructure such as the PERG³ in Morocco or the provision of development funds, such as the Moroccan National Initiative for Development which grants funds to NGOs, including migrants' associations, for development projects. The use of public funds for collective migrant initiatives came under question, particularly when some infrastructural projects seem more aligned with the migrants' wishes and their lobbying power rather than on 'real' needs in the local community. On the contrary, the government's contribution to **private migrant initiatives** seems to be limited to **consultation** on technical matters, if at all, and shaping a generally attractive investment.



- **Non-financial support:** migrant initiatives, whether private or collective, can benefit from non-financial forms of support, such as **market research**, **technical support** (e.g. agricultural, industrial, ITC), assistance in the **design and implementation of development projects**, and support through **academic research**. These types of services help to create an environment that is conducive to development and entrepreneurial activities. In fact, the enterprises of the return migrants visited had clearly been affected negatively by unfavourable investment conditions (e.g. the lack of market support for organic farmers). This significantly decreases the opportunities for success of entrepreneurial migrants, who often act as 'lone pioneers'.

One of the many signs indicating the infrastructural works of a *tres por uno* programme. The project shown here was in the community of Los Morales, which lead to the construction of the main road

- Certain forms of support are available both in Morocco and in Mexico. **Collective migrant initiatives in Morocco** can benefit from **technical support** as several migrant associations are accompanied by **development NGOs** in the design and implementation of development projects. In this manner, migrants' projects are professionalised and, through this process, migrants have the ability to develop new skills. Moreover, projects can be designed to be sustainable and to have built-in follow-up strategies. The initiatives of the NGO *Migration et Développement* in

³ The Programme for General Rural Electrification (Programme d'Electrification Rurale Generalisé), which is financed by the Moroccan state, supports the electrification of villages by contributing up to 50% of the funds, while the rest is contributed by village resident and emigrants.

Morocco provide an example of the close collaboration that can occur between migrant associations and development practitioners. This approach also provides an alternative to those migrants who are mistrustful of the government and its agencies and who are more comfortable with a bottom-up approach.

- **In Mexico**, on the other hand, there is greater collaboration between **migrants, migrant associations, local communities** and **research centres**. For instance, there is an ongoing collaboration between the faculty of the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas and some of the communities visited in an effort to create a local development strategy to which migrants and their associations can contribute. This type of collaboration aims to create a greater understanding of communities' development needs and to share such information with migrant associations. Ultimately, the knowledge gathered by research centres is aimed to inform public policy and encourage the design of a development strategy. Pairing research with migrant associations is important when one considers that HTAs often have a stronger role in development than the local communities. The high importance of remittances in the Mexican government's development agenda has given HTAs this preferential role in development. In this landscape, public universities and research centres can play a significant role in equalising power by acting as development agents on behalf of the local community and helping to decrease the tensions that have emerged through migration processes.

Some of the initiatives observed in Zacatecas were not initiated by migrants, although they did involve the participation of migrants or they aimed to help migrants. For instance, the Centro de los Derechos del Migrante (Center for the Rights of the Migrant), which aims to safeguard the rights of migrant workers abroad, is an NGO with a great cause that was started by a U.S. lawyer. While this does not reduce the value of the initiatives, it raises the question of whether migrants are essential in some of these ventures. It also brings our attention to the fact that we should not narrow our vision too closely on the value added of migrants alone, while, at the same time, excluding the value that could be added by individuals who did not migrate.

In the end, as we prepare to evaluate migrant initiatives, we are brought back to a previously mentioned point. Does our understanding of development match with the development that migrants envisage being promoted by their initiatives? What level of development are we asking migrants to achieve? If we are picturing sustained large-scale economic growth, we know that these initiatives are bound to disappoint us as such growth cannot be based only on migrants' activities. Economic development requires functioning and effective institutions and sustained government investments in education, infrastructure and market development over many decades.

Informing migration and development policies with on-the-ground evidence

The visits to Mexican migrant communities and development initiatives promoted by HTAs were revealing. One main observation repeatedly made by participants was the **discrepancy between the needs of the local community and the migrants' wishes for development**. Rather than the migrants and their associations' failure to understand the local needs or the lack of power of the local communities, the responsibility seems to lie in the **lack of a strategic vision** for development at the national level. The **absence** of a strategically-designed policy indeed prevents the **government from**

taking responsibility for development and renders it incapable of steering the direction of development activities.

Where does migration policy fit within this landscape and how should migration and development policies interact? At a minimum, migration policy should take into account its developmental implications as much as development policies should take into account their impact on migration. Considering that humans have shown a tendency towards mobility over the centuries, we begin to see that migration is part of social change rather than an anomaly. Faced with this fact, it might be more appropriate to integrate **migration policy with other national public policies**. Health policy should therefore address the needs of all its population, including for instance the specific necessities of aging return migrants. Particularly useful to the migration and development debate is to explore ways in which migration can be integrated into more general development policies. This would allow movement away from the **remittance-dependency predicament** upon which both Mexico and Morocco have come to rely. Shaping a better development context will also make countries more attractive for migrants to invest in. In such a setting, migrant associations could also join forces with development agencies and government agencies, so as to promote development projects that serve the needs of the local community.

Development agencies are well-placed to provide a 'space for dialogue' and promote a joint development agenda. Their expertise in the design, implementation and management of multi-faceted development projects would encourage an approach that understands and takes into account the disparate objectives and the strengths and weaknesses of each stakeholder. Of particular importance to our discussion is to reach a complete understanding of the **added value brought by migrants**. It is known that migrants are willing to contribute financially and otherwise, but it is less known that their presence in the development sector could be used to **pressure governments to commit to local, regional and national development**. However, a development policy should not be too selective and, while including migrants for their resources, it should not exclude **non-migrants**, who might be able to make valuable contributions.

Strategies for economic development must take into account the **comparative advantage** of the communities and regions in question and must encourage feasibility studies that prevent unrealistic investments. For instance, in Juchipila, being close to Jalisco, a region that produces large amounts of *tequila*, locals interpreted this proximity to be a clue to change production from the local main crops to agave, the plant used for tequila production. This did not turn out to be a viable business strategy, because the region of Jalisco already had sufficient access to agave. The local population and the migrants who invested in this venture should have been assisted by local agencies and guided by a local strategic development plan, which would have steered them away from this non-viable business venture. This misguided decision led to a second business decision: to open a mezcal factory to make use of the large amount of agave cultivated in the area. The lack of an understanding of the market for the sale of mezcal, which competes with the well-marketed tequila, has led to further investment in infrastructure development and machinery that are hardly exploited. The *mezcalera* is in fact in use only two days a week, as it is currently overproducing, and its profitability is improbable in the future, unless a marketing strategy is quickly pursued.

As mentioned previously, the ***tres por uno* programme** was developed with the aim of improving living conditions rather than promoting economic development, so it is important to evaluate *tres por uno* projects within their frame of reference. Nonetheless, a full evaluation of the projects under

this programme should be carried out to clearly understand if any development process has so far been promoted by these initiatives. This is particularly important since studies have shown that migration is overall not a generator of development. But if *tres por uno* projects show a positive trend, then they could possibly be **expanded to economic development** and they could be used to channel funds for investment or to address development shortfalls beyond the local level.

While initiatives that **encourage profitable investment**, such as **small-to-medium size enterprises (SMEs)**, should be explored and pursued if viable, one must remember that it is unlikely that any business-minded migrant would want to invest in a business in rural areas, where it is much more difficult for an enterprise to be profitable. Progress in rural areas will be made only once the Mexican and Moroccan governments commit to a development policy, to which migrants can contribute but that does not make them responsible for local, regional or national development.

One recurrent observation from the Mexican visits was the **lack of support** granted to **return migrants**. They seem to be poorly integrated and their initiatives do not appear to be supported either by the local community or by migrant associations abroad. Their endeavours are not encouraged and supported by local agencies, so return migrants are left to fend for themselves, sometimes trying to operate an enterprise against all odds. Even migrant clubs, with their active involvement, do not seem to be very successful in providing a support network. As a result some of these initiatives end up being 'zombie enterprises' that exist on paper, but they have little viability and sustainability. **Migrant associations** could become involved in carry out **feasibility studies** of possible ventures in origin communities and in providing **support for market development**.

Return migrants could be further assisted by the creation or enforcement of **social security agreements** (e.g. between Mexico and US) to ensure that return migrants can gain access to their retirement funds. Overall, **improved public policies** in the origin countries could help the local population, migrants and returning migrants who are willing to commit their resources to support local development.

In an effort to be comprehensive, we list a set of conditions that should enhance the development impact of migration:

1. The origin countries and regions must show **socio-economic and political development** that is visible and ongoing. Only in such environments will migrants become interested in substantial social and economic investments.
2. **Reduction of the militarisation of borders**, which merges the fight against drug trafficking and terrorism with irregular migration and prevents the circulation of migrants;
3. **Labour market policies** which create real opportunities for workers who stay in origin communities;
4. **Development of accessible and transparent market for agricultural products** that can support the initiatives of migrants and non-migrants and that can support local entrepreneurial development;
5. In the specific case of Mexico, the development of the agricultural market would be secondary to a **land/agrarian reform** that puts resources back in the hands of local farmers and entrepreneurs and that, at the same time, pays close attention to food security of the local populations;

6. The **elaboration of development strategies** that include **migrants as development agents**, but which **do not separate them from the development process**; this will facilitate the **dialogue between migrants and development agencies**, will give migrants the ability to contribute their resources, and it will function as mutual capacity building;
7. With specific regard to encouraging migrants' investments, it is necessary to **understand what migrants want and the obstacles they experience**; at the very least, conditions should be put in place for the flourishing of SMEs, spanning from the creation of infrastructure to facilitate commerce to providing support in business planning, market research, access to markets and training opportunities for entrepreneurs.
8. Support programmes that simulate the *tres por uno* funding system which involve destination country governments; for instance, a 2x1 programme could be sponsored based on a **contribution of funds by the migrants and a matching contribution by the destination country** (the US or the EU in our case);
9. The **integration of migrants in the destination country** must be fostered, not only to enhance the well-being of migrant communities abroad, but also to increase their capability to contribute to origin country development;
10. The **circulation of migrants must be facilitated** as it encourages the development of transnational linkages and promotes frequent exchanges.

Identifying the conditions needed for a more positive migration and development interaction is only half the problem. We acknowledge there are **obstacles** that make **policy coordination** problematic. For instance, in destination countries the areas of migration and development are the responsibility of different governmental agencies who work independently and with different goals in mind. In addition, some of the conditions listed above require the participation of origin and destination governments and other non-governmental actors. This is so much more complicated as all stakeholders have their own agendas, which at times might be complementary, but which most often represent conflicting interests.

New policies must produce the conditions under which such projects and investments **promote the livelihoods** of the population in origin towns and regions, **rather than pursuing the development of places**, an approach that could be both less demanding for development practitioners and more tangible for the beneficiaries.

The suggestions proposed above call upon the reform of several national policies – land reform, agrarian reform, trade agreement evaluation, etc. Once the right conditions have been created by such reforms and migrants will have incentives to invest in their countries of origin, the need for migration and development policies might disappear altogether.

Expanding the migration and development research agenda

The observations made during the study-tour highlighted the complexity of migration – development linkages. The study-tour and subsequent discussions confirmed the value of comparative research. As the discussions progressed, it became increasingly apparent that further comparative research should focus on the regional and local levels, which allow for a more meaningful comparison than a comparison of national statistics.

By the end of the study-tour, several suggestions were made to expand comparative research. The themes proposed, with specific research subtopics, were:

Remittances

- What are the impacts of (social, professional, financial) remittances, their multiplier effects and their other effects (e.g. effect of remittances on taxes)?
- What is the contribution of high-skilled migrants?
- Have remittance patterns changed over time? Over the years, has there been a greater or smaller commitment to collective investments? Has the effectiveness of collective projects changed over time?

Transnationalism

- Explore the link between integration, transnationalism and migrants' contribution to development;
- Explore the benefits produced and the obstacles experienced by migrant organisations involved in integration activities and the development in the countries of origin.

Transit and circular migration

- Comparison of trends in transit migration in Mexico and Morocco;
- Explore alternative models of circular migration based on past experiences and the current socio-political and economic environment.

Macro-forces and their effects on migration and development

- Explore the effect of the global financial crisis (the 'Great Recession') on migration trends, return migration and depopulation of origin communities;
- Develop a comparative analysis of free trade agreements that considers the continuation of the current free trade systems (such as NAFTA) as opposed to more-equitable forms of trade, cooperation and development .

In addition, it was proposed to examine the role of general public policy, rather than specific migration and development policies, on migration processes and migration impacts in Mexico and Morocco.

On a practical level, non-academic participants advanced a request that future scholarly research produce results that can be used by migrants, civil society and policy-makers. Rather than shaping research to fulfil their needs, these actors encouraged scholars to include better dissemination plans in the core research activities, so that the useful information produced through research can reach other sectors. In addition, this approach could address the imbalance created by a concentration of funds for migration research and ensure that benefits trickle down and empower migrant associations and development agencies.

Conclusions and the way forward

During this experimental study-tour, migration and development specialists from different sectors were brought together to confront the latest evidence on migration and development initiatives and observe some of the 'realities' as experienced in specific communities in Zacatecas. The discussions

that were sparked during the event were important for the advancement of the migration and development debate. Particularly insightful were the policy suggestions and the proposed expansion of research to add empirical evidence to our current understanding of the development impact of migration. The discussion led to an expressed commitment to continue migration and development research with a comparative approach.

The similarities in the migration history of Mexico and Morocco are bound to continue along a parallel path as Morocco's free trade agreement with the EU is nearing its implementation phase. This makes the continuation of a comparison between the two migration systems even more relevant as the NAFTA experience can be used to inform our expectations for future trends in Moroccan migration. This initiative's focus on comparative research is meant to further the understanding of migration and migration and development in theory and practice, but also to provide empirical evidence that can inform policy-makers and influence the policies adopted by destination and origin countries. The IMI is committed to continuing the work started with this first study-tour and to supporting a collaborative network on migration and development.

The IMI is looking forward to continuing discussions started in Zacatecas during its second study-tour, which will take place in Ouarzazate, Morocco in 2010. To maximise the usefulness of its initiatives, the IMI is planning to focus the event and the discussions on migration and development experiences that are rich in empirical evidence. The IMI will disseminate results to migrants, their associations and policy-makers.

Appendix 1 - Study-tour Programme

Transatlantic dialogues on migration and development issues

Mexico-US and Morocco-EU Experiences

*Zacatecas, Mexico
March 16th-20th, 2009*

Monday 16th March

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 9.00 – 9.30 | Registration |
| 9.30 – 10.00 | Welcome Address
Oliver Bakewell , <i>Senior Research Officer, IMI</i> and Raúl Delgado Wise , <i>Director, Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas</i> |
| 10.00 – 10.30 | Transatlantic dialogues on migration and development issues: objectives of the study-tour, activities, and work-plan
Hein de Haas , <i>Senior Research Officer, IMI</i> |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | Coffee break |
| 11.00 – 12.00 | Overview lecture: Migration and Development – latest evidence
Hein de Haas and Oliver Bakewell , <i>Senior Research Officers, IMI</i> |
| 12.00 – 1:30 | Trends in Migration South-North: Morocco-EU and Mexico-US
Chair: Kathleen Newland , Director, Migration Policy Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none">The case of Morocco, Prof Mohamed Berriane, <i>E3R, Université Mohammed V – Agdal</i>The case of Mexico, Prof. Raúl Delgado Wise, <i>Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas</i> |
| 1.30 – 4.00 | Lunch at El Recoveco (3-5 minutes walking distance from the Hotel) |
| 4.00 – 5.30 | Migration and Development in Mexico and Morocco: Roundtable
Chair: Regina B. Barbosa <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Moroccan experience: <i>Mohamed Aderghal</i>, <i>E3R, Université Mohammed V – Agdal</i>, <i>Chadia Arab</i>, <i>President IDD</i>, and <i>Abderrazak El Hajri</i>, <i>Migration et Développement</i>The Mexican experience: <i>Prof. Rodolfo García Zamora</i>, <i>Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas</i>, and <i>Richard Jones</i>, <i>University of Texas – San Antonio</i> |
| 8.00 | Dinner at typical Mexican restaurant <i>Los Dorados de Villa</i> |

Tuesday 17th March

- 7.30 **Departure for field visit to the city of Juchipila**
Briefing on the schedule for the day en route
- 10.00 – 10.30 **Visit to Mezquitera Sur**
Production of Mezcal Juchipilo with migrants' investment
- 10.30 – 12.00 **Visit to El Remolino and its main Hometown Association**
Participants will divide into small groups, each visiting a different development project
- 12.00 – 1.30 **Lunch at restaurant *Mazqui* in Apozol**
- 1.30 – 5.00 **Visit to Amoxochitl**
- 5.00 – 6.30 **Departure for Zacatecas**
Debriefing and reflections on field visits
- 6.30 – 8.00 **Dinner en route to Zacatecas**
- 8.00 – 9.00 **Return trip to hotel Meson de Jobito**

Wednesday 18th March

- 9.45 **Departure for visit to 'government agency' in Zacatecas**
Briefing on the schedule for the day en route
- 10.00 – 12.00 **Visit to State Migration Institute in Zacatecas**
- 12.00 – 1.00 **Visit to the Legal Assistance Office for the Migrants**
- 1.00 – 2.30 **Lunch at restaurant *Mi Pueblito***
- 2.00 – 5.00 **To Be Determined**
- 8.00 **Dinner at *El meson del Taco***

Thursday 19th March

- 8.30 **Departure for field visit to Jerez**
Briefing on the schedule for the day en route
- 9.30 – 12.00 **Visit to Jerez and community of Los Haro**
Tour of the town and explanation of migration trends and impacts by Prof. Rodolfo Zamora
- 12.00 – 1.30 **Lunch at local restaurant in Jerez**
- 1.30 – 3.00 **Visit to villages in the *municipio* of Jerez to view and discuss different development impacts of migration - “El Cargadero”, “San Juan del Centro” and “Jamulquillo”**
- 3.30 – 5.00 **Visit to migrant families for interviews**
Participants will divide into small groups
- 5.00 – 6.00 **Return trip to hotel Meson de Jobito**
Debriefing and reflections on field visits
- 8.00 **Dinner at hotel**

Friday 20th March

- 9.00 – 10.15 **Moroccan perspectives on Mexican migration and development experiences**
Chair: Luis Guarnizo
Panel: Chadia Arab, Abderrazak El Hajri, Abderrahman Zahi, Mohamed Berriane
- 10.15 – 10.45 **Coffee break**
- 10.45 – 12.30 **Transatlantic dialogue on policy implications**
Chair: Oscar Chacon
Panel: Abderrahman Zahi, Jaime M. Salama, Kathleen Newland, and Regina B. Barbosa
- 12.30 – 2.00 **Lunch at restaurant *La Cuija***
- 2.00 – 4.00 **Where do we go from here? Directions for future policies and research**
Chair: Raúl Delgado Wise
Panel: Mohamed Berriane, Rodolfo Zamora, Oscar Chacon, Richard Jones, Kathleen Newland and Hein de Haas or Oliver Bakewell
- 4.00 **Event ends**

Appendix 2 - List of participants

Transatlantic dialogues on migration and development issues: Lessons from the Mexico-US and Morocco-EU experiences - *International Migration Institute*

Study-tour in Zacatecas, Mexico - March 16-20, 2009

No.	Country	Name	Organisation	Email
1	EU/Spain	Jaime Mira Salama	Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	colaboradores.jms@maec.es
2	EU/Germany	Regina Bauerochse Barbosa	Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH	Regina.Bauerochse@gtz.de
3	EU/FR	Chadia Arab	Reseau Immigration Developpement Democratie (IDD)	chadia_a@hotmail.com
4	EU/NL	Pier de Vries	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	pier-de.vries@minbuza.nl
5	Morocco	Mohamed Berriane	E3R, University Mohamed V, Rabat	mohamed.berriane@yahoo.fr
6	Morocco	Mohamed Aderghal	E3R, University Mohamed V, Rabat	m.aderghal@gmail.com
7	Morocco	Dr. Abderrahmane Zahi	Fondation Hassan II pour les Marocains Résidents a l'Etranger	contact via Mohamed Sairi, sairi_mohammed@hotmail.com
8	Morocco	Abderrazak El Hajri	Migration et développement	abderrazak.el-hajri@migdev.org
9	Mexico	Raul Delgado Wise	Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas	rdwise@estudiosdeldesarrollo.net
10	Mexico	Rodolfo Zamora	Foro Migraciones / Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas	rgarciaz@prodigy.net.mx
11	Mexico	Oscar Pérez Veyna	Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas	pveyna@estudiosdeldesarrollo.net
12	Mexico	Miguel Moctezuma Longoria	Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas	mmoctezuma@estudiosdeldesarrollo.net
13	US	Luis Guarnizo	University of California, Davis	leguarnizo@ucdavis.edu
14	US	Kathleen Newland	Migration Policy Institute	KNewland@MigrationPolicy.Org
15	US	Oscar Chacon	National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC)	ochacon@nalacc.org
16	US	Richard Jones	University of Texas-San Antonio	Richard.Jones@utsa.edu
17	GMF	Astrid Ziebarth	German Marshall Fund of the United States	AZiebarth@gmfus.org
18	EU/UK	Hein de Haas	International Migration Institute (IMI)	hein.dehaas@geh.ox.ac.uk
19	EU/UK	Oliver Bakewell	International Migration Institute (IMI)	oliver.bakewell@geh.ox.ac.uk
20	EU/UK	Simona Vezzoli	International Migration Institute (IMI)	simona.vezzoli@geh.ox.ac.uk
21	Mexico	Hilda Dávila	Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior (IME)	hdavila@ime.gob.mx