

Summaries of funded Impact Interventions

Supporting migrants as knowledge producers

Lead: Ethiopian Institute of Peace

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives, Building capacity

(August 2022 – September 2022)

Academic and policy studies and responses to migration have been dominated by scholarship produced in the Global North, raising questions as to whose knowledge is, and should be, involved in understanding the nature and future of migration.

The MIDEQ team in Ethiopia is publishing an autobiography written by a Hadiya returnee migrant during their detention in Tanzania and organising book launch sessions with the local community. Supporting migrants' own knowledge production in the Global South helps challenge the secular framework that reflects a Western epistemology. It provides important insights into how concepts and frameworks that are at the core of 'international' humanitarian debates are conceived of, negotiated, and enacted in Southern contexts. Creating a space for migrants to contribute to knowledge production based on a lived experience contributes to decolonising knowledge production in the field of migration. The book will launch in high schools in the Hadiya Zone, at Wachemo University and Migration Studies and Entrepreneurship Centre (WMSEC), helping to create better awareness and a more nuanced narratives on migration.

Justice: a migrating dance

Lead: University of Glasgow, Coventry University

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives

(April 2022 – March 2023)

This initiative forms a partnership between MIDEQ's access to justice and arts, creative resistance and wellbeing thematic areas, the Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Ghana, CUSP Network Plus and Noyam Institute for African Dance.

The work takes data and insights from MIDEQ's access to justice and the arts, creative resistance, and wellbeing work to create a dance piece. The piece presents and represents injustice/justice/voice to tell the story of a different 'look and feel' of justice in different contexts within the Global South. It is clear from research undertaken so far that dominant concepts of rights and justice are Eurocentric in their articulation and framing as manifested in different MIDEQ contexts. To change the narrative about justice and how it is experienced, the dance piece, musical compositions, films directed by Noyam young people and set/costume design in textile will use data and objects from MIDEQ countries, framed through the question of the look and feel of justice for migrants themselves.

A little bit like home: Nepali migrant workers place-making in Malaysia

Lead: Monash University Malaysia

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives

(December 2022 – October 2023)

Malaysia has been a popular choice for Nepali migrant workers according to data recorded by the Nepali government since 2008. In 2020, it is estimated that there were 240,000 Nepali workers out of 1.4 to 2 million documented foreign migrant workers in Malaysia and 73% of them are concentrated in the manufacturing sector. Despite their sizeable presence, little is known about their lives beyond the stereotype of a foreign worker entrenched in dangerous, dirty, and difficult jobs.

This project challenges dominant public perceptions of Nepali migrant workers through a set of artistic community engagement activities to highlight their experiences with direct involvement of the Nepali migrant worker community. The MIDEQ Malaysia team is producing video outputs with Nepali migrants for dissemination in a community-building event. The team is also running workshop sessions with community leaders to understand needs and interests of Nepali migrants and organising skills building sessions for migrants with focus on the creative arts. The aim is to promote long-term connections and exchange between the MIDEQ researchers, Nepali community leaders, artist-facilitators, and the Nepali migrant community.

Chinese gold miners in Ghana: book publication

Lead: China Agricultural University

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives

(May 2022 – March 2023)

The China team is writing and publishing a book in Chinese, exploring the daily life of Chinese gold miners in Ghana. The book aims to define and redefine the narratives of South-South migration by telling the stories and experience of Chinese migrants. It also serves as a platform for gold miners to share their experience as migrant workers which will help academia better understand Chinese migrants.

The book will present a new concept/theory that can further explain South-South migration and Chinese international migration. Doing so helps reshape the lives of migrants by understanding the social inequalities brought by South-South migration. The long-term goal is to influence policymakers into taking a humanised approach when reviewing policies on South-South migration. The book written by MIDEQ's China team aims to generate more dialogue in traditional and non-traditional forms of media, local, international, and government organisations.

China-Ghana migration corridor: photo exhibition

Lead: China Agricultural University

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives

(October 2022 – November 2022)

The China team is organising a photo exhibition to display professional images from the China-Ghana migration corridor and personal photographs from migrants to explore the diverse patterns and implications of migration, inequality, and development.

By developing new centres of knowledge and ways of understanding the needs of migrants and their distinct subgroups, the exhibit will serve as an avenue for learning about migration. The photo exhibition also opens possibilities for exchange and training, utilising modern technologies to form inclusive citizen networks and foster transnational solidarity in the fight to ensure migrants are aware of and have access to their rights. The supplementary narratives will document the history of arrival, integration, and mobility, finding one's place and political engagement, participation, and self-reflection, to raise awareness of human stories behind migration. The exhibit can provide stakeholders with significant resources to understand South- South migration and the narratives it entails.

Unpacking journeys: Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia

Lead: Monash University Malaysia

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives

(June 2023 – December 2023)

Unpacking Journeys: Nepali Migrant Workers in Malaysia is an immersive exhibition that seeks to critically decipher, understand and empathise with the perceptions, decisions made, and lived experiences of Nepali migrant workers in Malaysia. This exhibition, held at Monash University Malaysia, simulates the journeying of Nepali migrants coming from different parts of their country into Malaysia for work.

The exhibition provides contours of migrant living and working conditions as well as their long distance social relations with families back home. Through this activity, key findings of the Nepal-Malaysia Corridor are translated into an accessible, engaging and relatable format for a wider audience. The activity contributes to providing a humane and human rights perspective of the migration journeys and experiences of Nepali migrant workers and their households.

Key stakeholders like various migrant intermediaries and migrant worker civil society groups are invited to share knowledge and interact with Nepali migrants at the event. In addition to the exhibition, existing research data is being transformed and re-presented as photographs, infographics, voice narrations, short video clips, digital comics, podcasts and more. After the exhibit is over, select outputs will be archived in an open source platform for wider and longer use.

Community dialogues (cross-talks)

Lead: University of Ghana

Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives, Building capacity

(March 2023 – September 2023)

To ensure that the rights of migrants are protected and the findings of MIDEQ research reach grassroots policy makers and other stakeholders, a dialogue has been organised among host Ghanaian population and Chinese migrants on their rights and roles. This includes four community cross-talks (dialogues) from March to September 2023, for 396 community persons living in four communities in Accra Central in Greater Accra Region, Manso-Nkwanta (a mining community) in the Ashanti Region, Asutware in the Eastern Region, and Kasoa in the Central region. The community dialogues will bring together traditional leaders such as chiefs, queen mothers, religious leaders, local authorities, assemblymen and women, migrants, non-migrants and local radio stations, Ghana Union of traders association, and selected officials of ministries and agencies.

The community cross-talks or dialogues focus on migrants and host communities' rights, roles, relations, and responsibilities. Community members, migrants and government authorities are encouraged to develop a joint communique to detail out recommendations on how to promote migrants and host community coexistence.

Producing children's songs in Langa

Lead: University of Cape Town

Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives, Improving migrant lives

(April 2023 – August 2023)

The overall goal of this impact intervention is to create social cohesion between migrants and locals using artistic work (music) as an instrument of change by disseminating research findings into artwork, mainly producing children's songs. This will improve the level of mutual understanding and challenge migration related dominant narratives. The intervention will have a spillover effect of highlighting art related commonalities among African identities (music, costumes, food, language) while simultaneously amplifying their unique features. The project will bring together Ethiopian, South African, and other nationalities of children to sing the same songs in the various languages.

The participants include schools (where migrant children and locals attend); pre-existing partners and ongoing research activities connected to UCT's outreach program (such as Africa Unite and Langa Community Centre); MIDEQ creative arts researchers; a South African band; immigrant and local children and adults (parents or otherwise); and other immigrant groups.

Using art to give voice and improve narratives of children and wives of migrants

Lead: Nepal Institute for Social and Environmental Research (NISER)

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Improving migrant lives, Changing narratives

(May 2023 – September 2023)

The research conducted by MIDEQ in Nepal reveals the impact of foreign employment on families. While such employment offers economic opportunities, it also exerts detrimental effects on the psycho-social health, educational achievements, and overall well-being of those staying back, particularly spouses and children. The team are aiming to address these challenges by working closely with the vulnerable groups through the expressive medium of art, providing them with a platform to voice their concerns. These activities, in collaboration with local and provincial government representatives, are designed to engage officials with the repercussions of migration on children and partners of migrants who remain at home.

By informing policymakers about the potential negative consequences of migration, the intervention supports the development of more comprehensive policies that can effectively address these impacts. Simultaneously, it seeks to tackle deeply ingrained discriminatory practices and stigmatisation faced by these families within their communities and extended families, leading to violence and undermining their well-being. By raising awareness among local governments, communities, NGOs, and INGOs, the intervention aims to transform societal narratives related to the spouses and children of migrants, ultimately creating a more supportive and inclusive environment for these vulnerable groups. In summary, the activities hold the potential to bring about lasting, positive changes in the lives of these often-overlooked individuals and contribute to a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Capacity building workshop for media practitioners in Ghana to change narratives on South-South migration

Lead: University of Ghana

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives

(February 2023 – July 2023)

Media narratives on South-South migration in Ghana generally portray it as detrimental to socio-economic development. As a result of the involvement of a few migrants in illicit activities, immigrants from the Global South are sometimes portrayed as criminals. This is partly due to a misunderstanding of the diversity of migrants and their contribution to the Ghanaian economy. To change the narratives on South-South migration, the Ghana MIDEQ team organised a two-day training workshop in Accra for 30 journalists to enhance their capacity to publish MIDEQ research findings and accurate information, thereby changing the narratives on South-South migration. In line with the Ghana MIDEQ Theory of Change, building the capacity of journalists to disseminate our findings will contribute to a change in the narratives regarding the importance of South-South migration. This will significantly contribute to ensuring that appropriate policies are developed to harness the benefits of South-South migration for

socio-economic development in Ghana.

“Ghana Must Go”: Migration, resilience and mobilisation

Lead: University of Cape Town, University of Ghana

Impact Pathway (ToC) – Changing narratives

(November 2023 – December 2023)

Deportations and expulsions have been widely wielded by states in West Africa to scapegoat migrants and other mobile populations. In Ghana, anti-immigrant sentiments are often justified by referencing the expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983. This simplified narrative, of what was a tit-for-tat expulsion between Ghana and Nigeria dating back to 1954, serves as a mechanism to mobilise an anti-migrant sentiments.

To push back against this instrumentalised narrative, a complex picture of the history and social bases of the expulsions is necessary. This intervention does this through a 40-day exhibition of stories, artefacts, memories and convening of discussions interspersed with performances and music and media debates. The exhibition, dialogues, and campaign titled “Ghana Must Go” uses the narratives, artefacts and materials obtained through research with women and men in five of Ghana’s sixteen regions. The aim is to draw lessons about the need for cultivated, grounded and complex narratives that celebrate the positives of migration.