

The Story of Migration Animation

CASE STUDY



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[The Story of Migration](#) is a seven-minute animation produced in collaboration with MIDEQ partner [PositiveNegatives](#) and illustrated by artist Karrie Fransman. The animation is based on a script written with MIDEQ Hub partners in 11 countries and across various disciplines. The animation innovatively captures the key concepts underpinning the MIDEQ Hub, challenging many of the ideas that dominate media and academic representations of migration. It tells a new story of migration which draws attention to South-South migration and the relationships between migration, development and inequality and is grounded in research undertaken by those whose knowledge and perspectives are often underrepresented in global academic, media and policy debates. It highlights:

- The fact that migration between the countries of the Global South accounts for nearly half of all international migration, 70% in some places;
- The complex reasons why people move including poverty, conflict and love;
- The fact that inequalities are increasing and have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- The role of inequalities including gender and age in shaping migration decisions;
- Inequalities in the ability to travel safely between the countries of the Global South;
- The economic, political, social and cultural contributions made by migrants; and
- The implications of migration for those 'left behind'.

Work on *The Story of Migration* began in April 2020. The English language version was completed in February 2021 and translations began in March 2021. The animation was launched on 23rd June 2021 and is available in [English](#), [Portuguese](#), [Tamil](#), [Malay](#), [French](#) and [Mandarin](#). As of July 2021, the animation had been viewed over 4,000 times on YouTube (English 3,922 views, Malay 56 views, Mandarin 55 views, Tamil 74 views, French 145 views, Portuguese 454 views). The animation was highlighted by *The Guardian* newspaper resulting in an additional [95,000 views on Instagram](#). In January 2022, the animation was also made available in [Hadiyissa](#).

The animation was shortlisted for the [Best Animated Film for the AHRC Research in Film Awards \(RIFA\) 2021](#).

The Story of Migration animation is significant for the following reasons:

- The animation highlights the importance of understanding global migration from the perspectives of those living and working in the Global South and the ways in which inequality shapes migration experiences and outcomes. As such it provides an effective tool for engaging research participants, policy-makers, academic colleagues, private sector and the public in the Hub's work;

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- The involvement of virtually all Global South partners in the production of the animation means that ownership of this work and the underpinning ideas are collectively embedded in the Hub;
- The animation is available in six languages reflecting a strong commitment to multilingual working and ensuring that the Hub's work is accessible to partners and audiences in the Global South;
- The animation is being used as a teaching resource for MIDEQ's online courses and in primary, secondary and University settings in the UK and in the Hub corridors;
- The animation is being used as a 'hook' to be able to communicate the importance of the Hub's work to a wide range of audiences. For example, as a result of the animation an interview with Professor Joseph Teye was published in [The New Humanitarian](#) outlining why the Hub is focusing on migration in the Global South.

The production of *The Story of Migration* animation – from original concept to production of the script, creation of the animation and recording of voiceovers in multiple languages – involved a large number of Hub partners from a wide range of geographical and disciplinary backgrounds. This was important to ensure that the animation reflected the perspectives and interests of all those involved and that it was collectively 'owned' by the project. Drawing on MIDEQ's initial proposal, the project website, meetings and blogs, a number of ideas were developed for the script and MIDEQ Global South Co-Is and their teams were invited to contribute to the drafting process. There was substantial positive engagement from Global South partners, with extensive feedback, perspectives and new ideas. These inputs were collated and a draft script developed by the coordination team and re-circulated for further consultation before finalisation.

Unusually, all the creative teams had to work independently due to the pandemic and were only able to communicate electronically. The artist Karrie Fransman created the animation based on the final script. Once complete, the script was narrated in English by Dr Gameli Tordzro. Country teams were then invited to produce other language versions of the animation/voiceover. According to Dr Benjamin Worku-Dix:

“The Story of Migration has been the most collaborative animation we've made at PositiveNegatives, co-produced with 17 partners across 11 countries and during the most challenging times when the COVID-19 pandemic has meant we needed to rely on new technologies to successfully collaborate and physically work independently.”

The animation highlights the importance of South-South migration and of engaging with the experiences and perspectives of those living in the Global South. In so doing it makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and

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knowledge in the field. According to Dr Seng-Guan Yeoh, the Hub's co-investigator in Malaysia:

“The making of this short animation is itself a re-discovery of the complex entangled threads of the historical, socio-economic and geo-political forces structuring our perceptions and understanding of human mobility in the world today.”

Dr Bonayi Hubert Dabiré, MIDEQ's co-investigator in Burkina Faso notes that:

“For the most part, migrants from the South are heading for the South. This research project, designed and implemented with Southern researchers and focusing on South-South migration, will set the record straight and hopefully show the potential of South-South migration and the awareness that South-South migrants should have of this potential.”

The animation supports the Hub's work aimed at changing dominant migration narratives which often negatively represent – and impact on – relationships between migration, inequality and development in the Global South. According to Dr Jailson de Souza e Silva, MIDEQ's co-investigator in Brazil:

“Narratives regarding migration have been historically constructed by Northern countries. They only contemplate migration and the person who migrates upon notions of need, lack, absences and demands. MIDEQ seeks to construct a different narrative, in which migrants are regarded upon their possibilities, potentialities, potencies and inventive capability. Migrants are themselves the subjects of their histories, which they construct in new times and space.”

The animation will be a useful resource for our online teaching courses and is already being used by MIDEQ partners as a resource for their own University courses. More than half of those giving feedback on the animation via our online survey said they intended to use the video for educational purposes including in schools and on taught courses. The animation is also being used by our international project partners – most notably OECD and UNRISD – to draw attention to their own work on South-South migration and the relationships between migration and inequality.



Cover image

The Story of Migration image still. Photo by PositiveNegatives . CC-BY-NC.

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