



ICMPD

International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

**Addressing Irregular
Migration through Coherent
Migration and Development
Strategies**

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What makes the migration - development nexus successful?

- Migration out of choice rather than compulsion
- Security of residence in country of origin and country of residence
- Right to departure and re-entry
- Right to family life in country of origin and country of residence
- Equality of treatment with citizens in country of origin and country of residence
- Irregular migration only might meet first criterion

Irregular migration

- Different types of irregularity: From regular entry and overstaying to being born as a child of an irregular migrant
 - » Irregular entry, irregular residence, and irregular labour market participation do not necessarily match
 - » Trafficking and human smuggling is part of irregular migration, but they do not make the whole picture
- Regular migrants as well as migrants with an irregular status contribute to the development of the country of residence and the country of origin
- Irregular status limits contributions

Irregular migration

- In irregular migration, **migration** may be voluntary or involuntary
- In irregular migration, **irregularity** is seldom chosen voluntarily
 - » If everyone had mobility rights, no irregular migration would exist.
 - » If there were no state borders, no irregular migration would exist
 - » Safe to assume, that migrants would prefer regular status
- Migration as a coping strategy to improve living conditions for the family

Drivers for (irregular) migration

- Regular and irregular migration share common drivers and facilitators
- Are there specific drivers for *irregular* migration?
 - » Demand for informal labour
 - » Inadequate access to formal labour markets
 - » National policy incoherence (regularisations, strict circular migration regimes)
- Are there specific facilitators for *irregular* migration?
 - » Human smuggling industry
 - » Urban diversity and support networks
 - » Effects of international human rights treaties

Perceptions: Crisis

“People have no choice but to leave Senegal: a new saying by young people is “Barcelona or die”. Wealth is transferred from poor to rich countries and migrants follow.”

(Roundtable participant, Migrants’ Rights Network: Irregular Migrants: The Urgent Need for a New Approach, London 2009)

Perceptions: Structural effects

“...Another study (....) has argued that “many of the existing (temporary / circular migration) program conditions intended to “enforce” circularity seem to encourage illegal migration. These include short contract periods and non-renewable visas tied to particular employers.”

(EMN – Synthesis report on circular migration, Brussels 2011)

The tyranny of the “or”

- Gross inequalities, impoverishment and gross inequality prepare ground for irregular migration
 - Perceived lack of perspective may be more important than factual situation
- Inadequate channels for regular migration and inadequate visa conditions contribute to irregular migration
 - Perceived improvement potentials abroad may be more important than structural effects

Effects of irregularity

- Ability of migrants to contribute to their own, their families' and their country of residence' welfare depends on their conditions of work and living
 - » Irregular status reduces mobility (social remittances, skills transfer)
 - » Irregular status reduces potential income (material remittances)
 - » Irregular status increases material and immaterial costs of residence
 - » Irregular migration contributes to „children without parents“ phenomenon
 - » Irregular migration contributes to distorted perception of migration

Transnationalism, Irregular Migration and Integration

- Post-entry integration obligations as conditions for permanent residence status
 - » Focus on permanent settlement and exclusive orientation on country of residence
 - » Remittances and investments in country of origin regarded as sign of lack of integration and disloyalty to new country of residence
- Integration policies often neglect transnational realities
- Need to make room for transnational reality in integration policies
- Need to make room for integration in the migration – development debate

An “I – Tunes” Approach to Irregular Migration?

- Before Steve Jobs invented “I-Tunes”
 - » No choice: To listen to one song, you had to buy the whole CD
 - » Unfair costs: One song for the price of a CD
 - » Irregularity: Declining CD sales, increasing number of illegal pirate copies
- “I – Tunes” revolutionized the way to sell music
 - » Choice: Buy the song, not the CD
 - » Fair costs: Get a song at a fair price, individualize your collection
- People do not want to act illegally: I-Tunes allowed people to satisfy their needs in a legal way
- Is an “I – Tunes” approach to irregular migration possible, desirable and feasible?



Thank you for your attention!