



RESEARCH  
PROGRAM ON  
Water, Land and  
Ecosystems



Financially supported by



SEI STOCKHOLM  
ENVIRONMENT  
INSTITUTE

## Migration and agriculture resilience initiative for sustainability (MARIS) Linking Gender, Water and Agriculture

Asia Policy Dialogue

Guangzhou, China | December 17-20, 2016

# Contents

Background.....	3
Day 1, Introduction.....	4
Welcome Ceremony Prof. Wan Junyi, Dean of Faculty, SCAU .....	4
Introduction to the workshop Fraser Sugden, IWMI Nepal .....	4
Introduction session.....	4
Day 1, Session 1: Framing the issues .....	5
Overall trends and issues in Migration and Agrarian Change, Peter Mollinga.....	5
Coming home: the return migrants with ill-health and its implication for healthcare and household livelihoods, Shijun Ding .....	5
Irrigation water trade and farmers’ behavior: challenges from Labor migration, Liu Yiming .....	5
Migration and agrarian change in the Greater Mekong Region with focus on Myanmar, Michiko Ito .....	6
Day 1, Session 2: Country Level Experiences .....	7
China (Prof. Chen Fengbo): .....	7
Nepal (Amrita Limbu):.....	7
Laos (Chanphasuk Tatophone):.....	8
Myanmar (Zaw Min Naing): .....	9
Thailand (Soimart Rungmanee):.....	9
Day 1, Session 3: Identification of opportunities and interventions .....	10
Gender and migration, Elok Mulyoutami, ICRAF.....	10
Experiences in using simulation analysis to understand migration trends and impacts on poverty, John Ward, Mekong Region Futures Institute (MERFI) .....	10
Experiences in funding initiatives relation to agrarian change and migration, Thet Hnin Aye, Livelihoods in Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT).....	10
Lessons from Myanmar on migration to Thailand, Khun Moe Htun.....	11
Is migration an effective way to provoke rural development? Associate Prof Lu Jixia .....	11
Day 1, Session 4- Panel Discussion on Policies and Practices Relevant to Migration .....	12
China’s experience, Prof. Chen Fengbo.....	12
India’s experience, Dinesh Marothia.....	12
Sri Lanka experiences, WJSK Weerakkody .....	12
Experiences from Thailand and Myanmar, Michiko Ito .....	12
Day 1, Closing Discussion.....	13
Day 2, Problem Tree Presentations .....	14
Group 1: remittances not being reinvested in agriculture.....	14
Group 2: Increasing social inequality in the context of migration .....	15
Group 3: Degradation of natural resources, and their inability to support human systems .....	15

Group 4: Agriculture negatively affected by youth outmigration from rural areas .....	16
Problem Tree Discussions: .....	17
Day 2, Framing a Regional Initiative .....	18
Introducing the Migration, Agriculture and Resilience Initiative for Sustainability (MARIS), Alan Nicol, IWMI .....	18
Day 3, Experiences from Liandong village, Shaleng town, Dianbai .....	19
Visit to the village level committee .....	19
Questions that were discussed .....	20
Discussions conducted with female villager groups – .....	21
Interview with turtle farmer .....	21
Day 3, Experiences from Dahan village, Sishui town, Gaozhou .....	22
Migration Trends .....	22
Remittances .....	23
Return migrants .....	23
Day 4, Reflecting on the Conference .....	24
Multi-dimensionality of Migration .....	24
Knowledge and Technology Transfer .....	24
Day 4, Further Research and Recommendations .....	25
Migration and agricultural knowledge systems .....	26
Migration and inequality .....	26
Migration and public services in rural communities: health and education .....	27
Migration, agriculture and environmental sustainability .....	27
General .....	28
Typology .....	28
Appendices .....	i
Appendix 1: Concept Note .....	i
Appendix 2: Agenda .....	iii
Appendix 3: M&E – Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories .....	vi
Appendix 4: M&E- Feedback from Participants .....	xiii
Appendix 5: Participant List .....	xix

## Background

On December 17-20, 2016, at the South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, China, scholars, practitioners and government officials from across Asia discussed how migration is changing natural resource management and agricultural practices. Both positives and negatives of migration were debated along with the challenges faced by the left-behind communities and how policies and practices need to adapt to new demographic realities. The policy dialogue was organized by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE) and South China Agricultural University (SCAU), with financial assistance from the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and the Government of Sweden.



The conference, organized to coincide with International Migrants Day on December 18, 2016, brought together a diverse range of experts from twelve countries including Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Nepal, China, India, Myanmar, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Ethiopia and United Kingdom. The conference included a day and a half of presentations, discussions and collaborations around country-level experiences and regional implications of migration trends. In an effort to learn from the Chinese experience, participants travelled out into the field to two different rural sites for the third day, talking with village leaders and farmers about their experiences and coping strategies in the face of intense urbanization. The final day gave participants a chance to reflect on the learnings from the conference and coordinate follow-up activities and research.

Among the next steps discussed was the formation of the Migration and Agricultural Resilience Initiative for Sustainability (MARIS) network. MARIS is a new knowledge sharing network designed to share information and explore collaborations on research focused on the changing face of agriculture and gender in home communities. This conference was the most recent in a series of knowledge sharing events, most notably those in Delhi (November 2015), Stockholm (August 2016), London (August 2016) and Biratnagar, Nepal (September 2016). Further resources on this event, including the conference video, can be found at <http://migrationmatters.iwmi.org/outputs>.

## Day 1, Introduction

### *Welcome Ceremony Prof. Wan Junyi, Dean of Faculty, SCAU*

The welcome address was initiated by the Dean of the Faculty, welcoming participants and speaking about how over the last 30 years, rural labor migration has become a social phenomenon in China. He pointed out that long lasting and large scale labor migration has significantly changed the economy, society and rural-urban structure in China. He highlighted that migration in China has stimulated and changed the economy and helped bring in experiences from different people. He also emphasized that the research outcomes and partnerships of the conference would be of great importance to the University and China.

### *Introduction to the workshop Fraser Sugden, IWMI Nepal*

Fraser introduced the workshop by comparing ongoing Asian migration trends to the mass waves of migration and urbanization in Europe following the Industrial Revolution. Today's Asian pattern of migration is vastly different, in that oftentimes a link to the migrant's home economy remains. The migrant may pay remittances, continue to own land in the hometown or return for special yearly or familial events.

Fraser then discussed the pressing need for this conference. While it is widely recognized that migration is a defining issue of our times, the effects of migration on the left-behind communities has not been adequately studied. China is the ideal venue for a discussion on the plight of these communities, as not only is China the largest migrant contributor in Asia (one-third of Asian migrants are Chinese), but it is also the most advanced country in addressing migration-related issues. Participants will be able to discuss the policies and programs helping alleviate outmigration's woes with Chinese professors, graduate students and village leaders and residents in the field.

In addition to gaining an improved understanding of China's migration realities, Fraser described three other goals of the conference. Firstly, how are gender and generational roles changing in a time of mass internal and external migrations? Secondly, how are water resources, which are commonly maintained by a collective, affected by migration and the accompanying labor shortages? Finally, how are remittances being used in different Asian countries- what are the rates of reinvestment in agricultural or other remunerative enterprises? Fraser pointed to the field visit as an opportunity to see firsthand how certain rural residents have used income generated in cities to raise their own cash crops and livestock.

### *Introduction session*

Workshop facilitator Michael Victor asked participants to talk about what they hoped to learn from the workshop while introducing themselves. Some key points included Amrita Limbu expressing that she hoped to discuss how to make agriculture an attractive occupation, Miaojie Sun wanting to see the link between research and policy, Chanphasuk Tatophone wondering about research methodologies across the region, Farah Ahmed being interested in gender roles in different countries, and Soimart Rungmanee describing how, as a researcher in Thailand, she often witnesses the receiving side of migration, and wants to understand more about the situations of those left behind.

## Day 1, Session 1: Framing the issues

### *Overall trends and issues in Migration and Agrarian Change, Peter Mollinga*

Peter began by chronicling his personal study of migration in Senegal and South India. He highlighted that migration must be understood as a normal human occurrence, rather than a historical aberration. In modern day migration trends, though, the scale and intensity of globalization is larger, particularly economic globalization. Additionally, the degradation of natural resources is unprecedented.

He also cautioned participants on the potential pitfalls of studying the impact of human movement. Firstly, he explained that migration's impacts do not fit nicely into mono-causal policy desires, as there are many motivations behind migration. Simple truths and one-size-fits-all policies will not lead to sustainable and effective solutions. Secondly, he warned of the lack of proper evaluation methods post-implementation. Migration policies have sometimes backfired, increasing migration rates when they aimed to do the opposite. Policy implementation will need to be accompanied by regular monitoring and evaluation to learn from both successes and failures.



Peter closed with the two themes he thought most pertinent in today's research landscape. Firstly, the effect of migration on the commodification of land and agriculture. Secondly, the effect of migration on agrarian relations, including the feminization of agriculture and cooperative attempts at natural resource management. He encouraged participants to stay attuned to how case study findings could fit into these larger themes, without losing the granularity that is necessary in such a complex issue.

### *Coming home: the return migrants with ill-health and its implication for healthcare and household livelihoods, Shijun Ding*

Professor Shijun Ding detailed the dangers that came with being a migrant worker in China, noting that too often, "rural areas export good health, and import ill health." Every year in China, there are 5,000 occupational deaths of migrants, along with 100,000 permanent injuries. Migrants from the poorest households are disproportionately impacted. Construction and manufacturing are both the most common occupations, and the most dangerous. Due to low participation rates in social security schemes, there are few government-provided safety nets to lessen the risk for migrants and the families they leave behind. In general, Chinese policy does not take into account the dangers of migrant work. Increased access to insurance could benefit the families of dead or disabled migrants.

### *Irrigation water trade and farmers' behavior: challenges from Labor migration, Liu Yiming*

Professor Liu Yiming conducted a study in the irrigation area of the Lianan Reservoir in Zengcheng city, Guangdong province to understand farmers' behavior regarding irrigation in order to determine which policies, pricing mechanisms and technologies most encourage water conservation. The study also looked at the implications of rural labor migration on irrigation water management and water trade. Some of the policy recommendations included increasing block and quota management of irrigation water, having different water prices for different crops, metering irrigation water and identifying reasonable water

prices which will encourage farmers to save water and improve income. Professor Liu also posed a few questions to the group on the implications of rural labor migration on irrigation and water trade. She pointed out that migration would have an impact on irrigation technology in terms of investment, changing irrigation patterns, use of new technology or resulting change in cropping patterns. She also raised the critical question of who should own rights to the water, be it the farmland contractors or the planters.

### *Migration and agrarian change in the Greater Mekong Region with focus on Myanmar, Michiko Ito*

Michiko Ito, from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), noted that migration is often met by intense scrutiny and judgment. Outsiders question the motives for migration more intensely than they do the motives related to choices in irrigation or health, for example. This may be related to a failure in how experts communicate the importance (and oftentimes necessity) of migration. It must be viewed as taking a risk for the sake of survival. It is and will always be a component of human life, and we need to understand how to make it fit rather than focus solely on fighting it. Michiko emphasized that IOM's goal is to provide information for various stakeholders, particularly by engaging with policymakers to help them understand the concept of migration and its importance across different sectors rather than trying to convince them to decide other people's futures.

In Myanmar, 1 in 5 people are migrants, higher than the worldwide average of 1 in 7. About 30% of Myanmar's population lives in urban areas (as of 2014), which is projected to increase to 50% in the future. With improved infrastructure through large investments in transport and economic corridors within Myanmar and across the Greater Mekong sub-region, migration has increased, both internally and externally. It is difficult to tally internal migrants in the region because different countries have different definitions of internal migrant. The most popular destination for Myanmar's emigrants (and all greater Mekong sub-region emigrants) is Thailand, which is five times richer than Myanmar per capita.

The presentation also emphasized the cross-learnings that countries such as Myanmar can derive from China, in fields such as mechanization of agriculture.



## Day 1, Session 2: Country Level Experiences

### China (Prof. Chen Fengbo):

Professor Chen Fengbo provided participants with an overview of migration in China, describing historical trends and current conditions. With increasing migration to urban areas, urbanization in China has increased by 1.2% every year for the past 20 years; urban population has increased from 29% in 1995 to 54.7% in 2014. The average time duration of migration per year is about 9.7 months and nearly 59% of the migrants are males between the ages of 16-45. The average cash income per household from non-farm work is about 34,439 CNY (5,380 USD per year). Chen highlights that rural to urban migration has led to decreases in rural labor forces, which will continue to decrease if wages or incomes in this sector do not increase.

Chen noted that with migration there has been a change in the farming systems in China with increasing commercialization and emergence of land markets. He cited examples across different provinces in China: In Hubei, migrated farmers are renting nearly 15-20 hectares of land in other places in pursuit of profit; local new farmers in Jiangxi use money earned from wages in non-agricultural sectors to invest in rice cultivation and collectively farming on more than 30 hectares of land with middlemen helping to collect land from different households; large farmers in Anhui manage 150-200 hectares of land through collective farming.



Guangdong province (within which lies Guangzhou), which is one of the most rapidly urbanizing areas in China, is trying to use mechanization to address the challenge of labor shortages in rural areas. Use of machines for rice cultivation has increased, with nearly 87% of the area now cultivated through tillage machines and 69% by harvesters. Use of rice transplanting machines is still limited in this area. The challenge in expanding mechanization across the Guangdong province is due to the hilly terrain.

The Chinese government has implemented numerous policies at the national level towards agricultural development, such as encouraging land transfers and labor-saving technology extensions, encouraging family farming since 2013, and emphasizing production efficiency and not just overall yield.

### Nepal (Amrita Limbu):

In Nepal, half a million workers migrate per year, although there was a slight drop in emigration following the earthquake and a change to the remittance tax policy. About one-quarter of households have a migrant family member, that number is higher among poor and land-deprived households. Lack of access to land, lack of employment, low wages in farm jobs, peer pressure, and political disenchantment are other driving factors for migration. For women, migration is also an opportunity to overcome social and cultural constraints such as conflicts in family, alcoholism of a male family member etc.

International migration is more common than domestic as wages are higher abroad. Annual remittances are about 30% of the country's GDP, amounting to USD 5-6 billion. The poverty rate in the country has also reduced from 41.8% in 1995-96 to 30.8% in 2003-04 and 25.2% in 2010-11. However, the remittances

are rarely invested in agriculture or other productive (income-generating) activities, as nearly 80% are used for other household expenses.

Migration has adversely affected agricultural production and yield. Agriculture as a percentage of household income has declined due to migration (61% in 1996 to 48% in 2004 to 28% in 2011). Farm lands are either abandoned or rented out due to labor shortages, particularly a shortage of adult male laborers. This has resulted in increasing agricultural wages. Many farmers are not able to meet the costs to continue farming. Nearly 50% of households in hill districts and 81% in plains districts reported a lack of laborers as the main reason for land abandonment. Regardless, agriculture still remains a major source of livelihood in rural areas. Nearly 76% of the total households in Nepal are dependent on agriculture for their income.

Out-migration has both benefitted and hurt women, as the gendered division of labor has blurred. This means that women play an increased role in the house and community, but also are often overburdened as they take on additional agricultural responsibilities.

The presentation highlighted that national policies on migration are silent when it comes to agriculture. For instance, the National Land Use Policy of 2012 discourages keeping agricultural land fallow and using productive land for non-agricultural purposes.

The state can take away this land from the owner if it has been left fallow for more than 3 years. This has huge implications on a migrant's household. Amrita emphasized the importance of focusing on arrangement of employment opportunities or alternate income-generating activities as an important policy issue for improving the economic status of the relatively land-deprived households. It is also crucial to pay attention to women's time constraints, labor and level of participation in the household and community in the face of increasing work burden.



### Laos (Chanphasuk Tatophone):

The agricultural sector contributes significantly to the economy of Laos, with rice cultivation being the main cropping system. The influx of out-migration from Laos to other Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand is due to limited work opportunities and lower wages within Laos. Thailand also attracts a large number of laborers in the region due to its economic growth and industrialization. The rural livelihood in the country has transformed and has increasingly diversified with increasing opportunities for off-farm and non-farm employment.

Chanphasuk stated that migration in Laos occurs both by choice and by necessity. The remittances flowing in provides otherwise scarce cash resources. For those households with rice and food deficits, remittances help to meet the daily food requirements and other basic necessities. For those households producing surplus rice, the remittances can contribute to investing in other livelihood sources and in working capital. Migration is likely to continue to be a common livelihood strategy for farming households.

Laos has also benefitted from the skills and technology transfer that sometimes accompanies migration cycles. Migrants returning from Thai rubber plantations have brought back the knowledge necessary to increase rubber production in Laos.

The presentation highlighted the implications for government policies in Laos, such as

- Farming systems need to adapt to labor constraints and the associated wage rates.
- There is a need to provide farmers with regular and continuous technical knowledge transfer and training on modernized, advanced agricultural technologies.
- The government should create employment opportunities, especially in the processing sector to absorb the growing number of young workers from rural areas (who would otherwise migrate for work).
- Need to support and mobilize resources for vocational training programs to help the transition to non-farm employment.

#### Myanmar (Zaw Min Naing):

In Myanmar, a country lacking in-depth study of internal migration, the Centre for Economic & Social Development (CESD) conducted a 1,100 household survey. The survey found that 16% of households have a migrant member, with 82% of that migration happening after the political opening-up of 2010. Urban growth and investment increases in the manufacturing sector is the main pull of internal migration. Migrants are young (average age of 20) and predominantly male (55%). Agricultural regions had much more out-migration than in-migration. The country's largest city, Yangon, receives 62% of migrants, with only 8% going abroad. Average monthly remittance is USD 72. In Thailand and Laos, the rice harvest season draws many international migrants to come back home to help their families.

#### Thailand (Soimart Rungmanee):

Thailand acts primarily as a receiving country for the rest of Southeast Asia. Those patterns have shifted as Thailand closes off to certain types of migrants, meaning that the previously normal cycle of migrants from Laos on a seasonal basis is now illegal. Migrants often live in poor conditions, or are sent back home on a daily basis. Thai migrants to the Middle East have returned with fish farming skills, which, coupled with remittance income, has flourished recently. Thailand differs from many other Asian countries in that agriculture is generally viewed as a respectable occupation- 80% of the country lists being involved in agriculture but the actual percentage is smaller and decreasing.



## Day 1, Session 3: Identification of opportunities and interventions

### *Gender and migration, Elok Mulyoutami, ICRAF*

In Indonesia, women have not as clearly assumed their husband's role in the agriculture sector following migration. The feminization of agriculture may exist, but more in-depth research is required to understand these changing trends. Highlighting the importance of accounting for gender relations in formulating policies, Elok mentioned that land tenure policy could also be modified and adapted to accommodate migrant's interest in land acquisition, as well as strengthen or expand customary land tenure over state forest land. Some of the challenges include the fact that there is no policy focused on migration issues in relation to agrarian change, land management and gender. Migrant's issues and gender is still not explicitly focused. International labor migration policy contains more exploitative dimensions rather than protective dimensions, as it still does not consider gender relations in migrant households.

### *Experiences in using simulation analysis to understand migration trends and impacts on poverty, John Ward, Mekong Region Futures Institute (MERFI)*

MERFI developed a migration model of the Mekong based off survey results from 1,000 households in each of six countries. The survey used hypothetical questions to attempt to understand future intentions, and found a linkage between household's historical patterns and their answers to the hypothetical questions. Once simulated, the model found that irrigation access is only marginally linked to poverty. Mining concessions had the greatest impact on likelihood of migration.

This also revealed that migration must be considered when assessing the impacts of mining- without accounting for migration, mining looks like a much more effective economic driver. MERFI had success explaining this to Lao politicians, who soon after changed the subsidy programs for both palm oil and mining rights. John was quick to frame this modelling success story by saying that simulations and even science are only one part of the debate. They shouldn't be treated as the only permissible evidence when developing solutions, and they must be introduced in a structured and systematic way.

### *Experiences in funding initiatives relation to agrarian change and migration, Thet Hnin Aye, Livelihoods in Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT)*

LIFT is a Myanmar-based multi-donor trust fund managed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). Its goal is to halve the population of Myanmar living in poverty by increasing incomes, nutrition and resiliency. To date, it has contributed USD 438 million and will be an important partner in future research on left-behind communities in Myanmar. LIFT work has helped to achieve increased resilience of poor rural households and communities, improved nutrition of women, men and children, improved policies and effective public expenditure for pro-poor rural development.

LIFT's funding initiative on migration aims to recognize migration as an adaptive response to shocks, stresses (including climate change) and economic opportunity. As labor out-migration is increasing rapidly in Myanmar, there are a variety of needs and opportunities emerging from this phenomenon that LIFT aims to address. These include making labor migration safer and more economically rewarding through access to accurate and relevant information, promotion of professional development through skills training and job matching to move to higher productivity jobs, access to services and resources such as health and financial services and improved international and national regulations for migrants.

LIFT has also partnered with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to support efforts to improve policies on international and national migration. The aim is to better protect international migrants with international employment standards, particularly related to recruitment processes, complaint mechanisms and a newly designed welfare system.

### *Lessons from Myanmar on migration to Thailand, Khun Moe Htun*

Khun Moe Htun focused on remittance usage in Myanmar. House construction, purchasing agricultural land, paying medical expenses, and purchasing land for a house are the four main uses, respectively. The reliance on remittances may be unsustainable for the future growth of the country. A shortage of labor following the massive increase in migration in 2010 has led to labor shortages and accompanying wage increases. Rubber production has expanded, and where rice is still being produced it is considerably more mechanized.

### *Is migration an effective way to provoke rural development? Associate Prof Lu Jixia*

China's history of migration- with many leaving their rural hometowns in the 1980s and returning in the 2000s, particularly after 2008, was heavily influenced by the income of the job they had in the city. Return migrants were more likely to work off-the-farm than on it. Of the 334 return migrants surveyed, 14% returned to agriculture, 25% to off-the-farm jobs and 61% had multiple jobs. Of those working multiple jobs, the most popular were construction, farming, livestock rearing and startup businesses, with toy manufacturing standing out as particularly popular. Many return migrants were not successful in their new business ventures, likely due to a lack of capital. Furthermore, many of the return migrants noted being treated like outsiders within their home communities after being in the city for so long. Government policies designed to help return migrants achieve financial stability at home were seen as unsuccessful as the assistance did not reach the migrants. These negative outcomes of return migration led many to re-migrate to cities.



## Day 1, Session 4- Panel Discussion on Policies and Practices Relevant to Migration

### *China's experience, Prof. Chen Fengbo*

Chinese migration needs further focus on a national policy level, in terms of adapting social security, healthcare and welfare in order to reduce the necessity of migration. That being said, while programs aiming to alleviate poverty have had the government's attention, necessary expenditures such as infrastructure improvement have too often been neglected. The Chinese government continues to focus on providing more job opportunities for youth in cities, and encourages youth migration to find skilled work. As China industrializes further, urbanization (caused by migration) increases as well.

### *India's experience, Dinesh Marothia*

As a government representative of the Indian state of Chhattisgarh, Professor Dinesh Marothia followed up on Professor Chen's description of Chinese policy by reminding participants that distress migration still exists in Asia because of the lack of proper manifestation of policy. The resources exist to provide sustainable livelihoods in people's hometowns, but the organization does not. One example of this failure to properly distribute resources is seen in irrigation. State government have provided funding for irrigation infrastructure, but many local water user associations (WUAs) have not held elections in years. Improper representation leads to unequal distribution of water, meaning some communities have no choice but to migrate for better farming opportunities. The amount of women's participation in community organizations is unknown. Assuring that women (and other marginalized groups) are engaging in meaningful ways is increasingly important as women become larger stakeholders in the agriculture process. Lastly, natural resource management must also be considered. As wetlands dry up, many women have to travel very far to find water, increasing the likelihood of distress migration.

### *Sri Lanka experiences, WJSK Weerakkody*

Unlike many other Asian countries, the majority of Sri Lankan migrants are women. They migrate to the Middle East and work almost exclusively as housemaids. The government recently introduced banning migration of women with children below 12. Previous government intervention included substantial subsidies on chemical fertilizers in the early 2000s in order to make up from productivity decreases. This led to a rise in health problems among farmers that were linked to the chemicals, so organic farming has been adopted by the government more recently as a safer model for the future. Additionally, free trainings are offered to train youth to become entrepreneurs and set up businesses in their home villages.

### *Experiences from Thailand and Myanmar, Michiko Ito*

Government must act as a major stakeholder when developing broad migration policy, and so Michiko Ito shared three tips for working within government structures. The first is to adhere to existing processes and procedures for the sake of expediency. Secondly, understanding when to involve government is crucial. Ministers and other key figures can give a voice to policy intentions, but that may only be helpful after other stakeholders have been consulted. Lastly, fit evidence-based knowledge within a narrative framework that is easily understood. Even after following this advice, those who seek to change policy can face obstacles on the international stage. For example, migrants from Myanmar in Thailand still face exploitation. They lack bargaining power with the companies hiring these migrants, as the companies can also choose to hire from elsewhere in Southeast and South Asia.

## Day 1, Closing Discussion

Participants discussed the patterns that emerged in the day's presentations and discussions, eventually honing in on six key issues. The discussion addressed the relationship between science and policy, as well as scientists and policy makers. A shared vision for left-behind communities needs to be developed by various experts and then pursued in the form of high quality research. The difficulty of policy making, which requires agreement from various stakeholders, needs to be better recognized by the science community. One of these stakeholders must be farmers, which can only rise to national importance with effective organization.

*Fraser Sugden presented the six issues of the day, as the group began the process of organizing the knowledge collected throughout the workshop:*

- **Productive use of remittances:** Where are they invested? Who decides on this investment?
- **Return migration and next generation of farmers:** Who returns? What do they bring back? What equity concerns exist?
- **Gender, age and migration:** What are the gender roles in left-behind communities following migration?
- **Land, water and migration:** How does land and water scarcity relate to migration? How does migration affect land management? How do collective institutions like irrigation groups fare following migration?
- **Inter-generational knowledge sharing or knowledge loss:** What knowledge do migrants bring back to their home communities? What knowledge (especially among young migrants) is lost as a generational workforce is absent?
- **Collective organizations of land and labor:** How do they fare following migration? What role can they play in alleviating negative impacts on home communities?



## Day 2, Problem Tree Presentations

The second day began with participants revisiting key issues raised the previous day. Participants were divided into four groups from various regions and backgrounds. Each group thought through the issue of migration using a problem tree tool to analyze the root causes and effects of migration. A problem tree exercise brings diverse groups together around a single issue or goal. A model of a tree is used to help participants visualize the connections between various root causes (represented by the tree roots), symptoms (tree branches) and solutions (fruit). Each group started by choosing an issue to focus on within the numerous migration-related issues discussed on day one.



### Group 1: remittances not being reinvested in agriculture

#### Root Causes

- agriculture investment is a low priority, housing and daily consumption is more immediately necessary
- agriculture not seen as having a high return on investment, or seen as risky
- lack of long term plan
- lack of conducive factors for investment (land, inputs, markets) or programs to encourage investment

#### Symptoms

- migrants don't see agriculture as a viable profession
- low productivity and efficiency, coupled with decreasing intensification
- farmers don't invest in cash crops
- scarce capital at local level to reinvest in agriculture

#### Solutions

- policies and programs need to be practical and simple to be effective
- training programs to support migrants (skill development, e-agriculture)
- provide matching funds to support municipalities
- collective funds to provide wider benefits to community

#### Additional Questions

- how to improve overall visibility of small-scale agriculture? (markets, land, food system)
- why is agriculture not remunerative?

## Group 2: Increasing social inequality in the context of migration

<b>Root Causes</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-debt from cost of migration</li><li>-landlord-tenant relations</li><li>-lack of access to information for certain groups</li><li>-work burden which intensifies inequalities between households: men, women, and generationally</li><li>-changing production systems</li><li>-not enough remittance to invest in agriculture</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-socio-political organization of marginalized groups</li><li>-intensified landlord-tenant relations</li><li>-food insecurity</li><li>-new elites/leaders (for better or for worse)</li><li>-more debt (cycle of loan repayment)</li></ul>

## Group 3: Degradation of natural resources, and their inability to support human systems

<b>Root Causes</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-population increase</li><li>-sectoral allocations, increased industrialization</li><li>-degradation of common pool land resources</li><li>-failure of institutions and disaster technology</li><li>-migration: voluntary and forced</li><li>-failure of users (society) to agree on system modifications that match ecosystem capacity</li><li>-distribution of rights and obligations to natural resource benefits poorly defined</li><li>-traditional institutions unable to manage “rules” of migration wave</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-food and livelihood insecurity</li><li>-transfer of knowledge and skills</li><li>-distress migration/environmental refugees</li><li>-total welfare (livelihoods, food, security)</li></ul>



Group 4: Agriculture negatively affected by youth outmigration from rural areas

Root Causes	Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-work and income instability</li> <li>-more jobs in cities</li> <li>-disparities between urban and rural development</li> <li>-agricultural development doesn't provide enough of an income</li> <li>-environmental degradation, land tenure and low productivity</li> <li>-farming is very labor intensive</li> <li>-increasing education levels</li> <li>-youth influenced by social media to move to cities</li> <li>-traditional farming knowledge not transferred from one generation to the next</li> <li>-political pressure to leave rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-decline in subsistence farming, needing to buy food even in rural areas</li> <li>-fallow land</li> <li>-land transfers and new farmers (ie cooperatives and agri-businesses are introduced and incentivized, consolidated land, more mono-cropping)</li> <li>-traditional farming knowledge not transferred from one generation to the next (both cause and symptom)</li> <li>-lack of labor in agricultural sector</li> <li>-emotional and social effects on left-behind population</li> <li>-skewed demographics, social pressures in rural areas (babies and grandparents)</li> <li>-reproductive population disappearing</li> <li>-family dislocations, dispersed households</li> <li>-change in perceptions and values</li> </ul>
<b>Solutions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-support for improved spatial planning (development of rural areas)</li> <li>-incentives for studying agriculture (scholarships, land, etc.)</li> <li>-incentivizing people to stay on the farm</li> <li>-making agriculture appealing (high tech, agribusiness)</li> </ul>	

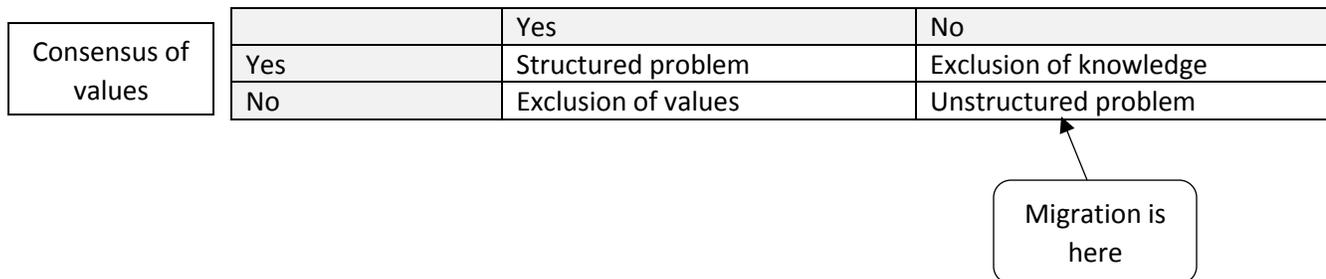


### Problem Tree Discussions:

Amrita Limbu noted that Nepal relies on outmigration to keep its population employed- it cannot provide domestic jobs to its entire population. Malaysia’s recent threat to ban Nepali migrants would be very damaging to Nepal’s economy if enacted. The discussion turned to how to make farming more appealing and profitable, after Fraser Sugden shared a story of a Nepali man in a small village. Although he was a farmer of modest means, his life on social media showed a false persona of constant wealth and luxury. Peter Mollinga suggested that increasing farm size through consolidation has worked to raise incomes in the past. Michiko Ito informed participants that Japan subsidizes part-time farmers in order to incentivize some connection to the land.



With these varied problems and potential solutions in mind, Peter asked if we will remain condemned to local and temporal observations, or if there exists a structure for identifying patterns and themes. All participants acknowledged the trickiness of this proposition, and Miaojie Sun spoke of the Stockholm Environmental Institute’s attempt at an evaluation table for migration. While it included key factors like education, poverty, number of relatives outside the country, and communication access, it was unable to predict the likelihood of migration. John Ward implored participants to understand that this complexity should be embraced rather than feared. He presented a diagram showing how knowledge and values intersect in different types of policy issues:



The diagram illustrates the range of problem types, from structured to unstructured. Given that both our knowledge and values regarding migration’s effects remain scattered (not in consensus), it can be categorized as an unstructured problem. We must encourage policymakers to comfortably inhabit this realm of ignorance that is necessary to solve an unstructured problem, rather than make a hasty decision.

## Day 2, Framing a Regional Initiative

*Introducing the Migration, Agriculture and Resilience Initiative for Sustainability (MARIS), Alan Nicol, IWMI*

In response to the discussions of the past two days, Alan Nicol proposed the formation of a new knowledge sharing network on the impacts of migration on home communities. With separate African and Asian branches, its goal would be to blend research institutions, government and national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around a common research theme. Tentatively titled the Migration, Agriculture and Resilience Initiative for Sustainability (MARIS) network, *its three goals are as follows:*

- 1. Promote a better understanding of the current knowledge and policy landscape**
- 2. Identify challengeable assumptions and ideas**
- 3. Propose innovative research-for-development initiatives to lead to new understandings and policy thinking**



Acknowledging the existence of migration consortiums such as the Migrating Out Of Poverty (MOOP) consortium and the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) by World Bank, MARIS would inhabit a unique niche. It would focus on migration's impact on home communities, with a particular interest in agriculture and agrarian change. With the intent of reshaping narratives, it would inform organizations where and how to take and use knowledge, and potentially co-produce these knowledge products.

Participants offered valuable feedback for MARIS, encouraging the development of a strong policy narrative that can be pushed forward. The network would expand as necessary, and begin by sharing development tools and stories of best practices.

## Day 3, Experiences from Liandong village, Shaleng town, Dianbai



### Visit to the village level committee

- The team met with the leaders of the communist party (including Village Secretary Lin Rong Guo) in the village where a meeting was organized between conference participants and communist party leaders.
- The team met the vice president who was a women representative. She mainly focuses on issues around population policies and women's issues in the village.
- This village has both a governance committee and communist party leadership. In this case, they were the same eight people filling both roles.
- Main characteristics of the village:
  - The village comprised of 9,600 households residing in 250 hectares
  - 3,800 had migrated to the cities
  - Their main occupations were growing rice, vegetables, Chinese medicinal plants, with vegetable growing as the primary occupation
- Things seen physically in the village:
  - Turtle rearing cultivation
  - A dam site which provides irrigation for agriculture
- Discussions and issues highlighted by the members of the party and village members were as follows:
  - More and more young people are migrating to cities in search of a better lifestyle and job opportunities.
  - Mainly people above 50 either return back to the village frequently or permanently to take care of the remaining farm lands.
  - Turtle rearing has been identified as a lucrative livelihood option by a young man in this village who does not wish to leave his family and migrate to the city.
  - Golden turtles are the special type of species that is cultivated here. It is not only considered auspicious but also sold at a very high price in the markets.

- This livelihood activity of turtle rearing is however a very new intervention and only one or two households have taken this up as an alternative livelihood option, so still need to wait and see before it is scaled up further.
- The other livelihood observed is green beans which are commonly cultivated by many farmers in this village.
- The topics of migration was not overall seen as an issue among the village members, as they felt it was a gradual process of upward mobility, where youth need to migrate in search of a better life for themselves.
- The village today does not have many opportunities other than farming and daily wage earning, which are not seen as very modern occupations for the younger generation Migration is more of a second generation trend, where families who are young migrate in search of jobs and to provide better schooling and higher education for their children.
- The only challenge that the old people faced in the village due to migration was the lack of manpower to help them on the fields. As people grew older, the small farms were deteriorating and had low productivity. However, since they felt it was enough for them to sustain a small family, it was a manageable proposition for the older population.
- There were also social challenges, such as the lack of care takers for old people in the village.
- The village also faced long gaps of young family members not being present in times of emergencies. Many worked almost 10 months out of the village and only returned for festivals or marriage ceremonies, which are mainly during spring time.

### Questions that were discussed

*Q1. Why do people migrate? Some of the responses are as follows:*

- One of the main reasons was the lack of availability of land within the village for agriculture. As families grew, land was divided and wasn't sufficient for everyone to produce enough to feed the entire family. So older generations encouraged youth to move out of their houses and build a living elsewhere
- The young people also became less interested in agriculture once they were exposed to social media and other opportunities in the city. Aspirations grew and migration became a fashionable trend among the youth.

*Q2. Are the remittances received invested back into the villages? How are they utilized?*

- Yes, not all, but sometimes people reinvest back into a livelihood option within the village
- Popular reinvestments include turtle rearing, pig rearing and growing Chinese medicinal plants, all having a high return on investment.
- Turtles are also used for trading amongst each other in the village, especially the Golden species, which is unique and auspicious so more households aspire to own one.
- Forest lands are available on lease but are not suitable for cultivation of crops due to unfertile land, as a result no one really invests in them.

*Q3. Who are the types of migrants?*

- Male members are the first ones to migrate from the village, as they have the responsibility of sustaining their families. However, in this village, women and girls were also encouraged to migrate for a better future. Hence, the ratio of men versus women migrating was not too stark

- The Government of China in fact encouraged youth to move to cities and have set policies in place that promote migration
- Another initiative introduced by the Government of China is to promote entrepreneurs in the village by providing them with supportive policies

Q4. What is the most profitable occupation in the village?

- Being a wage earner is considered the most lucrative occupation, labor earns 200 RMB (USD 30) per day, which is not generated from any other livelihood option.

#### Discussions conducted with female villager groups –

- The women mainly are engaged in agriculture within the village. Their main livelihood is rice cultivation.
- Average income is about 30,000 RMB (USD 4,400) annually, net income not known
- Women are also engaged in cultivation of small kitchen gardens where they grow fruits and vegetables (mainly lettuce)
- The women say most of the men and youth in their households have migrated, leaving them to manage the home farms and old parents. Some follow their husbands, but those who are widowed or unable to travel usually deal with a lot of social barriers and challenges within the village
- Most of the time, they have to take care of their children and also old parents, along with managing other household duties and farm lands
- Their biggest struggle is to manage the old who are unable to take care of themselves. There is no social security schemes or medical facilities provided by the Government that can support them. Most of the time women incur the financial burden to take old people to nearby hospitals. Sometimes this means that all their savings goes into getting them treated and returning them back to a poverty trap.
- Most of the issues were around the lack of facilities and healthcare, which compelled women to stay back in villages to support families.

#### Interview with turtle farmer

- Used to work in Guangzhou toy factory, making 30,000 RMB (USD 4,400) annually
- Moved back to hometown and invested 300,000 RMB (USD 44,000) in turtle rearing facility in order to make money closer to family and in the more pleasant village environment
- Now makes more than triple his salary in the city: over 100,000 RMB (USD 14,500) annually
- Most of his peers who have moved back to the village are also involved in some part of the turtle business (rearing, growing feed, selling etc)
- Mostly sells to hotels nearby for pets, used to sell them largely for food but has seen that part of his business decline recently
- Learned from his parents, though technology has changed since their generation raised turtles



## Day 3, Experiences from Dahan village, Sishui town, Gaozhou



A scenic village with a hilly terrain and a small water body teeming with fish, Dahan village has the distinction of being the biggest village in Gaozhou City with a population of about 7,300 people and over 1,700 households. The team met with the head of the village, who was also a Communist party member.

The agricultural land is about 200-400 mu (13-27 hectares). The land size in the village is very small, averaging about 1-2 Mu (1/15 ha) per household, therefore it is not sufficient to meet the basic food needs of the household. An area of nearly 6,000 mu (400 ha) is hilly and some of it has been converted to litchi farms by villagers. Paddy is cultivated twice a year (two seasons) and vegetables too. The vegetable produce is exported to the northern part of China. Vegetables are one of the major sources of income after remittances.

The source of irrigation is reservoirs (located about 2 kilometers from the village) and canal systems. The reservoir is a man-made structure built by the local people. The villagers noted that the canals are not be used, as they are far from the farm lands and there is not enough water during the dry season.



### Migration Trends

High rates of migration, with about 2,000 people in the village working as migrant wage workers, 60% of whom are male migrant wage laborers. Women migrate too, mostly young women in search of better job opportunities or education in the city. The migration is internal, to urban areas of Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Dongguan to work as wage laborers in small-scale businesses like metal and steel industries, construction work etc.

Limited land for agriculture and low daily wages in and around the village are primary reasons for migration. Younger people prefer to migrate to the city for better opportunities and cash income. The migration has also led to labor shortages in the village, not just for agricultural activities but also for non-agricultural work. However, with a focus on urban development, the government has also emphasized infrastructural developments and mechanization of agriculture in rural areas, which has helped farmers cultivate, harvest and plant using machines. Access to markets, easy transportation of produce from the

village to other parts of China, road construction, housing development and renovation support provided by the government to the rural poor has helped to sustain the livelihoods of the people in the village.

### Remittances

People prefer to spend remittance money on education, which will facilitate better opportunities with better jobs and income for their children. Some of the migrant households also invest their remittances in buying luxury items such as televisions, air conditioners, refrigerators, etc. These are generally the wealthier families.

Remittances are rarely invested in agriculture. The income earned from the sale of produce (vegetables) is invested in agricultural inputs: seeds, fertilizer etc.

### Return migrants

The migrants visit home regularly, especially during festivals. Some of them return to the village as they get older due to difficulties in working in factories. Despite migrating to the city with families, migrants prefer to keep their farm and household land in the village instead of selling it because of the strict *Hukou system*. Under this system, the citizens of the country should have household registration under national law. It is also known as *Huji system*. This registration officially identifies a person as a resident of an area. It is also a family record as it is issued per family and includes information on name of the parents, spouse, and date of birth, deaths, marriage, divorces etc.

Getting a house in the urban area is quite difficult and expensive, therefore, to have the household registration under the *Hukou* system, the person or household must own rural land. This system was also introduced to monitor and control the movement of people between urban and rural areas (Liang 2003). Individuals can be identified under the categories of rural and urban worker (Liang 2003). Villagers feel that this systems also helps the migrant keep linkages with their ancestral village. The provisions of this systems have now become more relaxed compared to the earlier norms and rules. Now rural workers can get a temporary working permit, which helps facilitate massive migration from rural to urban areas.



## Day 4, Reflecting on the Conference

The policy dialogue help highlight how migration is changing the rural and urban landscape where a simple divide between the two is no longer valid. It explored interconnections between regions and tried to draw up a framework to understand the changes taking place and policy interventions necessary to address these changes. A summary follows:

### Multi-dimensionality of Migration

- Agriculture can no longer be seen as a standalone livelihood activity. Migration has to be studied and viewed in the context of specific country profiles, with specific socioeconomic and political scenarios.
- The causes for migration are many, e.g., migration due to water scarcity, low agricultural productivity leading to food insecurity, forced migration due to disasters and other vulnerabilities that affect communities to migrate in search of a better income. It is even more challenging when examined alongside gender. Women are more vulnerable to shocks (social, financial and climate) and have to bear the brunt of male out-migration, leaving them behind with all the other additional responsibilities of farming and household duties.
- Myanmar has increasing rates of migration into Thailand facilitated by improved transportation corridors. Most migrants migrate to earn money faster so that they can reinvest it into buying land in their own country for agriculture. However, people of Myanmar migrate temporarily or seasonally, and return to their county during rice cultivation seasons.
- Vietnam faces issues such as low agricultural productivity and social problems, hindering agricultural development and forcing communities to migrate in search of better livelihood options.
- Some countries, such as Sri Lanka and China, see migration as an opportunity to improve rural economies. China's rapid urbanization promotes rural out-migration into urban cities.
- India mainly suffers from distress migration due to poverty, and lack of adequate resources and knowledge makes the farming communities vulnerable to surviving climate shocks in rural areas

### Knowledge and Technology Transfer

- Transformation in rural China with increasing rural labor migration and agricultural changes. New labor saving technologies are contributing to agrarian changes in rural China. Guangzhou is one of the most developed regions in China and is rapidly urbanizing with industrialization as well as agricultural developments.
- Knowledge and technology transfer with migration; for example, laborers from Laos migrating to Thailand to work in rubber plantations, have bought back the skills and knowledge of these livelihoods.
- What are the current programs and schemes invested in by the government that can facilitate this aspect of migration, diverting remittances to agricultural investments? What are the current policies and inter-linking sectors, that impact rural development and how do they link with migration? What are the policies at different levels: national, regional and local?
- Bottom-up and demand driven local policies needs to be implemented
- Policy-based decision makings with extensive interactions and linking science and policy to disseminating accurate information is essential

- Effective policy interventions in the agricultural sector to support the left-behind population, not just in migrant households, but also in the area as a whole. Understand the context and coping strategies, such as addressing the issue of labor shortages, etc.
- The implications of increasing dependency on remittances for rural economy.
- An interesting perspective shared by China and Nepal is that migration promotes some unique opportunities for livelihoods. Remittances can be put to better use for promoting alternative livelihood options. Hence, migration should not always be seen as a negative strategy, but rather an adaptation strategy for the survival of rural communities.
- With the urban and rural divide diminishing, how do we define rural? We all saw cars and cell phones on our “rural” field trip, does this disqualify an area from being classified as rural?



## Day 4, Further Research and Recommendations

*Contributed by Peter Mollinga, with inputs from Fraser Sugden and Alan Nicol*

The migration policy dialogue focused on what happens to agriculture as a result of migration, and not on issues of forced migration, refugees or what happens to migrants at destinations or in host communities,

etc. It was felt that this aspect of migration is not researched sufficiently and that seems to be supported by a quick browse through the migration literature.

The most interesting topics for further research (with the aim to think about research collaboration) could be classified under the following three foci:

### Migration and agricultural knowledge systems

Research by SOAS PhD student Giulia Baldinelli on migration and agrobiodiversity in the Bolivian Andes, convincingly shows that migration may have serious impacts on agricultural knowledge systems. On one hand, knowledge may be lost with the young generation migrating and knowledge not being transferred. On the other hand, migrants may bring back new types of knowledge and may stimulate new activities and ways of doing agriculture. Examples were given at the dialogue of Kerala farmers bringing spices to Chhattisgarh and starting new types of farming. Tea workers in Darjeeling brought tea cultivation to Chhattisgarh.



The feminization of agriculture that is happening in many places also highlights that many agricultural (extension) approaches and policies are misdirected, that is, not targeted at the right actors, being women, and sometimes the migrants (who may not be there all the time).

Hence, more effort to understand agricultural knowledge dynamics associated with migration is needed. For instance, how migration 'opens up' knowledge (new sources/influences) versus 'closes down' existing indigenous knowledge (perhaps) and how does this influence the wider narrative battles and political economies of how to respond to demand for food and mitigate climate stress and other effects.

### Migration and inequality

This is perhaps the most obvious theme. Does migration work as an equalizer or a differentiator in home areas? How does migration relate to accumulation in the home area, for instance in aquaculture? Are remittances a basis for that? Are return migrants always change agents? A key question is the processes through which inequalities are perpetuated. Remittances can certainly generate new elites, but can also affect consumption patterns and put households into greater cycles of debt.

The money lenders who fund migration itself as well as new consumption, are the new elites in parts of Nepal. Similarly, migrants may return without the jobs or funds they had anticipated. It would be interesting to differentiate or categorize these relationships based on distance of migration, type, level of remittances in relation to family structures, etc. Greater systematization of understanding across a wider geographic space would be very useful.

Migration also changes generational roles in rural or agricultural communities, as seen in China. 'Is it a force multiplier' or equalities (in the right circumstances) or an excise for old power structures to reassert themselves?

Another under-researched issue is farmer migration. Examples can be found in Nepal and other countries, particularly of farmers from remoter regions coming to take the land of farmers who have left agriculture. It would be interesting to explore transfer of skills, age-structure of farmer-migrants, links to farm consolidation and 'new forms' of farming in terms of transformations. IWMI is about to embark on a new program with this at its heart.

Is the commercialization of land a main phenomenon in relation to migration? Peri-urban growth and what it does to agriculture is a theme here also. In what ways is migration transformative (in home areas), a vehicle of accumulation and differentiation, a harbinger of cultural change, a trigger for ecological and technological change and potentially a generator of new, socially-complex, multidimensional development challenges?

### Migration and public services in rural communities: health and education

There is an issue about the health and injuries of returning migrants which seems to be a big issue in China. In such a case, migrants do not only bring remittances, but also the need for care etc. In many ways this represents the classic process through which the rural economy 'subsidizes' a cheap and disposable labor force in the capitalist sector in the cities. Once a laborer is ill, they become the burden of the family at home. An anecdotal (but powerful) piece of evidence comes from a case was discussed at a meeting in Maychew, Tigray where young women returnees from the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, mainly) invariably return so traumatized that they can become mute. The psychological impacts of being a migrant is a serious issue.



There are also serious challenges to rural education systems because of migration. The assumption in education policy is that children stay in one place when they are at school. Mobile children do not fit into this pattern. Also, children may migrate themselves to access (better) schooling.

### Migration, agriculture and environmental sustainability

We know very little of what is happening to the natural resource base when there is a lot of migration or what is happening to ecological functions. Some possible consequences are ecological degradation as a result of lack of labor, and increasing difficulties to keep the landscape productive (cf. terracing). But also there may be reforestation by default – enhancing certain ecological functions. When there is movement towards more mechanization, and simplification of agricultural labor processes in general, what does that do the landscape/ecological dynamics? There is also the issue of fallow land and reduced pressure on resources. However, on the other hand, IWMI's research in Nepal shows a different trend where migration leads to greater insecurity for those who stay behind, and leading to intensification of cropping pattern. More research is needed to understand these trends.

Migration has impacts on how local bodies or institutions for Natural Resource Management are run (cf. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan) with diverse processes and effects. It would be good to start defining 'migrations' on a scale from 'normal, background noise migration' through to extreme and 'massive migrations'.

## General

It is very clear from the workshop and the literature that gender relations should be a major focus in the research. The important question is if there is anything new about migration in recent times? It might be argued that migration has always been there – and that is should not be construed as an exception or aberration or a novelty, but historically actually is the rule. The sense here is that the transformative effects of migration are larger in our era than they were before. It is not just the increased ideological importance of it (the 'threat to Europe' etc.), but actually migration as an important dimension of neoliberal capitalism. Are 21<sup>st</sup> Century neoliberalism and globalization driving effectively (or demanding) global labor markets, but the social and political systems are unable to deliver?

Myth busting is part of the research logic (as regards development in home areas in relation to migration, and the relation between climate change and migration). It would be interesting to unpack the political-economic tension in a series of high-level case studies of different economic sectors. Further, it would help perhaps to understand larger interconnections like the drive for x industry to have cheap labor (e.g. textile) and the inadvertent consequences in rural areas of South Asia.



Research has to be comparative as there is great diversity of situations and one can find any causality one wishes to find somewhere. Global approaches do not seem to be very helpful. However, the global interpretations and understanding does affect national policy environments. It would be interesting to unpack what the male outmigration in Nepal is actually affecting (construction in the Gulf, driven by x & y global economic factors, etc).

## Typology

It would be good to have a sort of typology of 'migration situations'. Encapsulating the kind of (qualitatively different) situations encountered in practice – each with their own dynamics in relation to 'home areas' -

- 1) Desakota migration
- 2) Labor/survival migration
- 3) Farmer migration
- 4) Long distance, including international, migration
- 5) Displaced persons, refugees
- 6) Copy-cat migration?
- 7) Group migration vs individual migration?
- 8) Direct/indirect migration?

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Concept Note



Financially supported by



## Migration Matters II

### An Asia Policy Dialogue on Gender, Water and Agriculture

Dec 17-20, 2016 | Guangzhou, China

#### Background

Migration is one of the defining issues of our time. Why people move, how, where and to what end has huge social, economic and, increasingly, political implications worldwide. Asia is a locus of huge movement — within countries, regionally and at a transcontinental level – and a considerable amount of this movement is labor migration. By this we refer to migration for work related purposes, usually from peripheral regions, either overseas or within the country.

Labor migration is particularly important from the perspective of agriculture and rural development, as migrants today tend to retain binding links to the sending community, with part of the family staying behind. Within communities and households which supply migrants, labor shortages and changes in gender and generational roles can lead to transformations in how agricultural resources are allocated and how ecosystems are managed (Paris et al., 2005b). Furthermore, with exploitation of labor migrants being widespread and living costs rising, questions are also raised about the potential for remittances to strengthen livelihoods (Sugden et al., 2014a). Understanding the livelihood outcomes for family members who remain in agriculture and the changing prospects of labor migrants themselves is increasingly important. It can allow policy makers and practitioners to make informed choices and identify interventions that support both migrants and their host communities in achieving greater financial and livelihood security.

Knowledge on the concrete impact of labor migration on agriculture and water management is scattered and insufficient. The diversity of experiences from countries undergoing different types of labor migration (male or female led; internal or international; short term or long term) have resulted in complex outcomes in terms of the impact on gender relations, agriculture and natural resource management.

Migration Matters II is a policy dialogue and field visit that will unpack these relationships in the Asian context, and support policy makers and practitioners in identifying solutions for agriculture and natural resource management at a time of unprecedented labor movement from rural areas. Two days of workshop and a two-day field trip in rural Guangdong has been planned.

The event will include researchers from national universities, and other relevant institutions who will share research findings, as well as policymakers, practitioners from NGOs and private sector actors directly engaged in agriculture and water development in regions facing high rates of out-migration from South, East and Southeast Asia.

### **Objective of the Dialogue**

1. **Knowledge Exchange-** Promote cross learning and better understanding of the key challenges facing agriculture in an era of out-migration through sharing experiences between representatives of countries from different countries in South, East and Southeast Asia
2. **Learning from the field–** Given that China is at the extreme end of the migration transition, a field trip to rural Guangdong would help in sharing knowledge about how communities are adapting to demographic transformation
3. **Explore**
  - a. The links between migration, agriculture, water resource management, climate and demographic stress and how communities are adapting
  - b. Map out emerging trends in agrarian transformation and critical policy issues required to address these trends and support the predominantly female staying-behind populations
  - c. How migration can be harnessed to generate positive change in rural communities (and addressing the structural barriers which prevent this from taking place)
4. **Develop networks and partnerships** through the development of a “Migration Matters Group”

### **Organizing Committee**

- IWMI –Dr Fraser Sugden ([f.sugden@cgiar.org](mailto:f.sugden@cgiar.org)), Nitasha Nair([n.nair@cgiar.org](mailto:n.nair@cgiar.org)), Farah Ahmed ([f.ahmed@cgiar.org](mailto:f.ahmed@cgiar.org)) and Om Acharya([o.acharya@cgiar.org](mailto:o.acharya@cgiar.org))
- South China Agriculture Committee – Prof Chen Fengbo ([cfb@scau.edu.cn](mailto:cfb@scau.edu.cn))
- SEI – Miaojie Sun ([miaojie.sun@sei-international.org](mailto:miaojie.sun@sei-international.org))

### **Other Resources**

1. IWMI’s work on Migration and Agriculture nexus - <http://migrationmatters.iwmi.org/>
2. Information on Workshop in Delhi - [https://storify.com/IWMI\\_/migrationmatters](https://storify.com/IWMI_/migrationmatters)

# Migration & Agriculture Resilience Initiative for Sustainability (MARIS):

## Linking Gender, Water and Agriculture

Asia Policy Dialogue | Dec 17-20, 2016 | Guangzhou, China

---

### Objectives of the workshop:

- **Promote cross learning and better understanding of the key challenges** facing agriculture in an era of out-migration through sharing experiences from different countries in South, East and Southeast Asia.
- **Identify interventions (policies and practices)** which can contribute to addressing the livelihood, agricultural and resource management challenges created by labor migration.
- Establish a **network** of researchers, development practitioners and policy makers to share information, better address knowledge gaps (research) and engage in policy dialogue around migration, agriculture and natural resource management

### Day 1: December 17, 2016

Time	What	Objectives/How
8.00 – 8.30	Registration	
8.30 – 8.45	<b>Welcome Ceremony</b> - Welcome address, Prof Wan Junyi South China Agriculture University	
8.45 – 9.30	<b>Introduction to workshop</b> Framing presentation on how this fits in with previous workshops and what we want to get of the meeting Overview workshop and participants	- Review workshop process/flow - Expectations and issues to address
9.30 – 10.30	<b>Session 1: Framing the issues</b> 1. <b>Overall trends and issues in Migration and Agrarian Change</b> , Peter Mollinga 2. <b>Irrigation water trade and farmers' behavior: challenge from Labor migration</b> Prof. Liu Yiming 3. <b>Migration and agrarian change in the Greater Mekong Region with focus on Myanmar</b> Michiko Iko 4. <b>Coming home: the return migrants with ill-health and its implication for healthcare and household livelihoods</b> Prof. Ding Shijun	Three high-level presentations that frame overall issues from global and regional perspective and discussion and the discussion.
10.30 – 10.50	Group Photo and Coffee Break	

Time	What	Objectives/How
10.50 – 12.30	<b>Session 2: Country level experiences</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lessons/experiences from China (Prof Chen Fengbo)</li> <li>2. Lessons/experiences from Nepal (Amrita Limbu)</li> <li>3. Lessons/experiences from Lao (Chanphasuk Tantaphone)</li> <li>4. Lessons/experiences from Myanmar - internal migration study in Myanmar's delta (Zaw Min Naing)</li> <li>5. Lessons/experiences from Thailand (Soimart Rungmanee)</li> </ol>	<p>A series of country presentations which highlight various issues related to migration, agriculture and NRM and impacts on agrarian change in countries (10-12 minutes each with 30 minute discussion)</p> <p>Discussion on general issues and challenges</p>
12.30 – 1.45	Lunch	
1.45 – 3.15	<b>Session 3: Identification of opportunities and interventions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Gender and migration</b> (Elok Mulyoutami)</li> <li>2. <b>Experiences in using simulation analysis to understand migration trends and impacts on poverty</b> (John Ward)</li> <li>3. <b>LIFT Experiences in funding initiatives relation to agrarian change and migration</b> (Ms Thet Hnin Aye)</li> <li>4. <b>Lessons from Myanmar</b> on migration to Thailand (Khun Moe Htun)</li> <li>5. <b>Is migration an effective way to provoke rural development?</b> (Associate Prof Lu Jixia)</li> </ol>	<p>Presentation on issues and interventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Policies and practices to facilitate adaptation or addressing migration</li> <li>* How migration can be harnessed to generate positive change in rural communities</li> <li>* The links between migration and ecosystem and climate stress</li> <li>* Impacts so far created on women and vulnerable communities</li> </ul>
3.15 – 3.45	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
3.45 – 4.15	<b>Session 4: Panel Discussion on policies and practices relevant to migration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prof Dinesh K Marothia, (India)</li> <li>- Dr. W.J.S.K. Weerakkody (Sri Lanka)</li> <li>- Mr. Xiong Gangchu, Bureau of Agri of Guangzhou local government</li> <li>- Michiko Iko (Myanmar, IMO)</li> </ul>	<p>Reflection on policy implications and what can be done, what are knowledge gaps and addressing institutional issues.</p>
4.15 – 5.00	<b>Sense-making of the day</b> Group work around problem tree analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How is migration affecting agriculture and NRM?</li> <li>- What are the main threats and opportunities to rural agrarian systems in relation to migration?</li> <li>- What does this mean for potential interventions?</li> </ul> What are potential gaps in knowledge and understanding	<p>Framing questions which allow participants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Bring together learning</li> <li>* Understand what this means and how we can address future issues.</li> </ul>

### Day 2: December 18, 2016

Time	What	Objectives/How
830 – 8.45	Review of day and agenda	
8.45 - 10.00	<b>Follow up on sense making and problem tree matrix</b> Continue group work and present back	
10.00 – 10.30	<b>Coffee Break</b>	

10.30 – 11.00	<b>Framing a regional initiative</b> Presentation by Fraser, Prof Fengbo and Alan Nicol on a framework for future work on Migration, agriculture and NRM	Provide an over-arching framework for discussions on developing entry points for proposals and initiatives
11.00 – 12.00	<b>Group work on identifying entry points for regional and national initiatives</b> Potentially look at a couple of emergent themes like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender and migration</li> <li>- Impact of migration on agri and NRM institutions</li> <li>- Technology issues related to migration</li> </ul>	Allow participants to identify potential policy, research and development interventions at national or regional level that could be part of a wider initiative. 45 minutes group work -15 minute discussion Use Previous Research Proposal outlines and build upon these.
12.00 – 12.30	<b>Introduction to field</b>	Provide participants with the context of what is happening in China and what we will see in the study tour
12.30 – 1.30	<b>Lunch and Depart for Field trip</b>	

### Day 3: December 19, 2016

*All Day in the field*

### Day 4: December 20, 2016

Time	What	Objectives/How
8.30 – 8.45	Review of day and agenda	
8.45 – 10.00	<b>Debriefing on the field trip – working groups</b>	Provide opportunity to discuss in working groups what was learned in the field trip and how it relates to earlier discussions
10.00 – 11.00	<b>Towards a network of practitioners</b> Group work to discuss potential ideas for developing a network or community of practice	Use a Purpose to Practice type of session which allows us to look how the network would be established and run
11.00 – 12.00	<b>Conclusion/Wrap up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General summary by South China Agriculture University and IWMI</li> <li>- Participants reflection and evaluation</li> </ul>	Provide opportunity to sum up main outcomes of the workshop and allow participants to reflect on what they have learned
12.00	<b>Lunch and leave for Guangzhou</b>	

## Appendix 3: M&E – Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories

*Contributed by Panchali Saikia and Farah Ahmed*

To understand the impact of policy dialogues held under IWMI’s Migration and agriculture resilience initiative for sustainability (MARIS), a Most Significant Change (MSC) study was conducted. The technical guideline of ‘Most Significant Change (MSC) framework for Regional Asia Environment Conference Support under Sida-SEI Strategic Fund’ has been referred to conduct the case studies. Information was collected through qualitative method (Key Informant Interview) to report the changes from the MARIS Asia Policy Dialogue held in Guangzhou, China in December 2016.

The policy dialogue included in-depth discussions, group exercises through problem tree analysis, research presentations. Policymakers, practitioners from NGOs, private sector from South, East and Southeast Asia were engaged through this dialogue process and a field visit to rural Guangdong was organized to promote cross-learnings and understanding of the impact of labor migration on agriculture and water management. The diversity of experiences from countries undergoing different types of labor migration (male or female led, domestic or international, short term or long term) have resulted in complex outcomes in terms of the impact on gender relations, agriculture and natural resource management. Therefore, it becomes essential to map the emerging trends in social, economic and agrarian transitions along with critical policy issues required to address such trends. This would require sharing knowledge and information, building networks and assessing the impact of how this dialogue can influence research programs, development projects and policy formation.

### Methodology

Under this MSC study, four in-depth interviews were conducted with participants at the policy dialogue. The key informants were selected based on random selection, considering the criteria of country, discipline and expertise. Follow-up interviews were conducted with them after three months in March 2017 to understand the change in perceptions.

Open-ended questions were asked to the key informants, such as their expectations & objectives in participating in the policy dialogue, relevance to their current work and knowledge gaps, perceptions and views on the workshop and field visit, new learnings, the way forward and how they have used the learnings from the workshop in their work over last three months.

The parameters to measure the change were change in knowledge and perceptions on the subject, integration into their current work, etc.

**Table 1: Key Informant Profile**

Change Story No.	Name	Gender	Designation	Country	Discipline & Expertise
I	Amrita Limbu	Female	Researcher	Nepal	Migration in Nepal, qualitative social research, cross country research programs on migration
II	Elok Mulyoutami	Female	Researcher on Gender, Local Knowledge and Social Science Trees,	Indonesia	Social research on gender and promotion of local knowledge

			Agroforest Management, and Marketing Unit, ICRAF Indonesia		
III	Michiko Ito	Female	Programme Manager International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Myanmar	Migration, Urban/Rural Sociology, Social Theory, Qualitative Social Research
IV	Soimart Rungmanee	Female	Lecturer, Puay Ungpakorn School of Development Studies, Thammasat University, Thailand	Thailand	Rural livelihood, rural sociology, ethnography

### Change Story I:

The main objective of coming to this conference for the informant was to learn from other country-level experiences on issues related to migration. This conference helped her in understanding migration and its impact on agriculture, which is a core challenge for Nepal. As per the informant, “The expectations from this was to hear from other regions, perspectives and experiences in agriculture in the context of out-migration, and how migrants and farmers can be facilitated with better services to access resources by developing supportive policies by the government. The field visit was also an attractive incentive to see alternative farming practices and learn from China’s experiences of new policies on migration”.

*Relevance to current work and knowledge gaps:* She works currently in a Nepal based migration research center, and is engaged in cross-country research on migration out of Nepal, which includes access to justice for migrants, socio-economic impacts on migration, issues related to women in agriculture, impacts on women being left behind due to male outmigration, gender based violence and family relations. She believes that she can use all the information and facts provided in this conference for a more holistic understanding of migration in Asia. She aims at filling in the gaps by writings papers which will highlight the issues around agriculture and migration, particularly from a Southeast and East Asian perspective. She also aims at organizing further policy dialogues in her country to bring migration into the policy agenda of governments where challenges exist daily while working with farmers in Nepal.

*Perception and views on the workshop, field visit:* According to the informant, “Migration has been highlighted globally as an issue and this conference now gives us a perspective on how migration has impacted the agricultural sector. We can try and work more closely with the relevant development organizations to move forward the agenda of access to resources for migrants and those who stay behind. This workshop has also given us more information and confidence to go back to our countries and engage in dialogue more effectively with our governments such as ministries of agriculture and rural development.”

She further added, “The field visits are the best way to learn more, as seeing is believing and becoming aware from a workshop always helps researchers to think what causes these types of migration. Being in the field really helps articulate the problems people face in reality and not just out of secondary literature, so this should always be encouraged for research.”

*New learnings:* One of the key learnings for the informant was to realize how the Nepal Government does not even consider migration as a priority topic to be considered in policy discussions. Because migration does not particularly fit into any particular department, governments frequently neglect it when drafting their policy agenda. China has a good and conducive environment for creating policies related to migration.

There is also a positive impact of migration. Farmers in Punjab are leasing their land to locals to keep agriculture sustainable while they migrate abroad. Rapid urbanization in China also illustrates some of the positive impacts of migration. She added, “My aim would be to write more papers on building an understanding of Nepal’s position on migration, and how best we need to bring about policy changes within agriculture in order to bring about positive impacts.”

*On the proposed MARIS Knowledge platform and network:* The MARIS network is a good initiative as it helps us to generate information from other regions and helps build a common network of professionals working in the area of migration and agriculture. One can also build on connections that were established in this conference and develop partnerships for further research. Based on this policy dialogue, we should also develop the network among ourselves to explore future research funding and partnerships.”

*Way Forward:* According to the informant, she would use information and knowledge gained in research papers and policy discussions in Nepal, and try to raise awareness among local institutions to support small-scale farmers to highlight their problems to the government. She suggested that the MARIS network could be utilized to lobby and support small-scale institutions to strengthen policy agendas and bring about changes for farmers.

*Most significant change story:* The informant spoke to her organization on returning back from China. Based on the discussion, the organization is very keen to further work on issues related migration and agriculture, and would like to collaborate in the future for organizing more such events and dialogues in Nepal. Further, they were very keen pursuing a joint project with IWMI. There will be a need for funding to be initiated in the future and her organization will be glad to partner with any organizations through the MARIS network to write up a proposal.

On a personal front, she learned a lot from the conference. She feels that earlier she only had a good overview of Nepal’s experience, however, following the conference, she knows about other Asian countries, especially China. She has expanded her knowledge base on China’s rural-urban scenario by going to the field and seeing for herself what the realities and barriers of rural communities are in the context of out-migration. It has broadened her understanding of how China operates. The experience is not just learning from literature, but includes hearing first-hand information about the issues happening in real time related to the agriculture- migration nexus. She feels that this is the kind of knowledge that always remains over the years.

Recalling an incident at the university in Sydney where she has recently enrolled into a PhD program, a Professor from Kings College in UK had visited the faculty to make a presentation on the global debates around migration. After having attended the conference, she felt more comfortable to contribute more effectively in the discussions on the topic.

She will be working towards including bits of migration studies into her PhD program, even though her topic is not directly related. However, she feels the need to include the impacts on left-behind

communities, given the lack of understanding of them in developing countries where there is much needed attention from governments. She had planned to write a paper on migration after the conference, but got caught up with her PhD program, however, she is working towards getting it published shortly. She would also like to continue her association with the MARIS network and explore opportunities to write more papers collectively with professionals and partnering organizations within the network and also share knowledge.

### **Change Story II:**

According to the informant, “My expectation from this conference was to build an Asia-specific understanding of issues women face in different regions. To a great extent this has been fulfilled, as I have been able to interact with a variety of fellow researchers coming from across the globe. Coming from Indonesia, this conference has really given me an opportunity to understand the overview of issues women face in other developing nations and this makes me feel empowered to know how one could bring these topics to the forefront of government policy agendas”.

The conference helped her understand and experience how China’s rapidly growing economy is leading to urbanization. The field exposure trip gave her an understanding of how people view migration positively and use it as an opportunity to explore livelihood options in order to make their lives better.

*Relevance to current work and knowledge gaps:* She works currently on projects that look into gender research aspects within World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). A lot of her work is around promoting local knowledge that helps support women entrepreneurs.

*Perception and views on the workshop, field visit:* Indonesia has a different perspective about migration than Nepal and India. The focus is more around remittances going back into something concrete, like investments made in land. There is a huge focus on improving agriculture, hence people migrate only to be able to purchase land for their future. “This conference has given me a perspective of why people in developing countries migrate. Mainly due to distress and poverty. In Indonesia, the migrants are not the poorest, they are mainly the middle income level who wish to migrate to ensure they earn faster and higher, to be able to reinvest it back into their homeland. I would like to learn from China on how they have used migration as an opportunity for growth and this is something I will take back as a learning to my country as well. I will also be able to write papers more effectively, giving a global perspective about migration and not just to the limited knowledge I had about Indonesia,” said the informant.

*New learnings:* The field trip was an enriching experience and one got to see the rural side of China. Behind the rapid growth of urbanization, there are stories of people back in villages who deal with challenges related to agriculture and an aging population. One big learning is to always try and understand more from the field experiences before policies are developed for development programs. She found the knowledge of how women across the region deal with various coping mechanisms particularly enriching.

*On the proposed MARIS Knowledge platform and network:* As per the informant, “I would want to be associated with this network for generating more knowledge about the changes taking place in the regions with regard to migration policies. This should also be a continued initiative so that the network could support researchers in organizing further policy dialogues, which might need to be country specific.” As for the way forward, the informant plans to share her experiences with fellow researchers in her organization. She also looks forward to contributing in discussions and papers in the future. Even though

Indonesia does not deal with distressed migration, she believes that the country needs proper policies in place that support migrants to affectively migrate, earn more money and contribute back into the country's economy.

### **Change Story III:**

The primary objective of participation for the informant was to interact with experts from different disciplines. Working with International Organization for Migration (IOM), and as a practitioner working on migration for many years, the informant highlighted that she often interacts and meets with experts from this discipline. However, the MARIS policy dialogue included experts from different disciplines as well. She notes that at earlier events on migration which she had attended, while they were dominated by experts on migration, did not cover other cross-sectoral issues which are crucial to understand and address in the context of migration. The MARIS policy dialogue provided and generated these discussions across different disciplines and sectors. It was a platform to share experiences of people working in different countries in Asia and on different issues of agriculture, gender, natural resource management, livelihood, rural development and its linkages with migration.

*Relevance to current work and knowledge gaps:* Concrete knowledge of migration's impact on agriculture and wealth in different countries in Asia is limited. Migration is occurring across regions, and in each of these countries separate knowledge must be generated. For different countries the impact will differ depending on the political dynamics, socio-economic aspects etc. Therefore, it is important to understand the existing policy and concept of migration, and how migration can be a positive factor.

Skills development trainings, employment opportunities and rural development through labor migration is what has been emphasized in IOM's work. This requires formalization of flow and maximization of benefits through remittances contribution, emphasis on bilateral arrangements between origin and host countries to facilitate formalization of labor migration flows. National government needs to integrate migration in their area of work, policy framework-departments working on livelihood, rural development, food security, disaster management etc.

*Perception and views on the workshop, field visit:* The informant had expectations to learn different tools and methods. "Being a practitioner, tools become essential for my work," stated the informant. She further highlighted, "What are the immediate tools that could be generated to understand and study the impact of migration on different people, the transition period of migration, the process, changing circumstances etc., across different countries? What are the different outcomes, ways to adopt and implement different frameworks, etc.?"

*New learnings:* The impact of mechanization on agricultural development, which could facilitate migration; investing remittances in socio-economic development of the household –be it in agriculture, household needs, education depending upon the wants and needs of the migrant household. Understand and analyze the situation and circumstances of migration carefully. Understand the transition process, such as in the case of China, where we learned whether mechanization or migration came first.

*Way Forward & Significant Change:* Through the MARIS Knowledge platform and network proposed at the policy dialogue, the participants of the dialogue can agree on a common agenda towards building a deeper understanding of migration, and social and economic changes such as agrarian transformation. The basic

understanding of these factors needs to be discussed through brainstorming sessions, utilizing the expertise of the network to develop a common analytical framework and building a research agenda.

The informant highlighted that expecting any significant change in the short period of three months is not possible. However, she feels that it has been useful in generating awareness and knowledge which will be useful for the participants to implement in their current work. For example, the need to address different concerns and aspects of migration such as its impact on natural resources, which will help in design and implementation of the informant's existing project on impact of migration on rural livelihoods in Myanmar. To implement these ideas and factors, it will be crucial to continue engaging and sharing knowledge among the MARIS team and develop an analytical framework model in the migration context.

#### **Change Story IV:**

Being a lecturer at a University and in the discipline of rural livelihood, rural sociology, ethnography, the informant wanted to understand migration and its impact on rural transformation. Her primary objective was to understand the inter-linkages and nexus of migration, agriculture and natural resources. The objective of attending the workshop was to understand these linkages from the experiences of India, China, Nepal etc. She further states, 'Migration has its impact across sectors, but not much has been studied in relations to its linkages with agriculture and water management issues, or at least I am not aware of such studies. These dialogues help researchers like us, to learn new things, provide us with the relevant information to focus on such topics and disseminate that information to the students and encourage and guide them to conduct such studies'.

*Relevance to current work and knowledge gaps:* Research studies on the process of migration, the challenges faced in migrating from rural areas to urban, and their impacts on rural farming and livelihoods in Thailand is very limited. Often researchers face the challenge of effectively conducting their work, due to limited availability of such literature. For instance, the informant states, 'Migration is an important element and relevant topic in relation to this study area of rural transformation and developments. I am currently researching about the challenges of the communities in rural Thailand in sustaining their natural resources and livelihoods. But due to lack of systematic research done on migration impacts in Thailand, I often face challenges. I have an interest in getting a deeper understanding and studying the situation of migration and youth in rural farming in Thailand'.

*Perception and views on the workshop and field visit:* The workshop had presentations made on different cross-cutting issues and from different countries (Myanmar, Nepal, Laos etc.). But the presentations and format seemed to be very scattered. The problem tree exercise provided a good platform for discussion. There wasn't much opportunity for brainstorming, small-group discussions, interactions etc.

*Way Forward & Significant Change:* The informant highlighted her plans to utilize the learnings from the policy dialogue to conceptualize and develop a research proposal on migration and youth in rural farming in Thailand. She stated during her interview during the policy dialogue, "This workshop has provided me the guidance to conceptualize the idea and focus on different aspects that needs to be covered for the study- such as impact of remittances, knowledge transfer of migrants to and fro, agrarian transformation and impact of migration on women etc. My way of work has always been academic-oriented, but interacting with practitioners at this workshop and organizations like IWMI, it has helped me to emphasize outcomes, implementations in the field and assessing its impacts, policy contribution etc. I also plan to

incorporate all these into the teaching curriculum, have extensive discussions with students and among them on this issue.”

During the follow-up interview, she stated that the field visit and discussions from the dialogue has extensively helped in her current teaching module. She says, “I am teaching a course on rural change in Southeast Asia so what I have learned from China is quite similar. Earlier I did not have the exposure or had not seen rural China, so there were plenty of issues. There is scope to conduct research such as policy on land and agriculture, migration trend in China, etc. and conduct comparative studies.”

She further added, “As a lecturer and a researcher who looks at migration and rural change issues, and based on the learnings and understandings from the policy dialogue, I have developed and have submitted a new project on crop booms and migration in Southeast Asia. In this project, my primary objective is to understand the impacts of agricultural capital flows in the region (from China in particular) on migration (both skilled and unskilled migrants)’.

The informant also expressed her interest to join the proposed MARIS Knowledge platform and network. As a researcher, she would be interested in accessing relevant publications, information on research activities and projects in this area which will also be useful for her university students. She also provided her recommendation in developing the knowledge platform such as the need to conduct research on existing platforms in this area or platforms which are similar, and bring in the cross-sectoral linkages of migration-agriculture-natural resources. She also suggested that the network needs to loop in experts working on this topic in different parts of the world, and not just those who have attended the workshop. Experts like them should be invited to such forums and discussion platform to get more insights on the topic.

## Appendix 4: M&E- Feedback from Participants

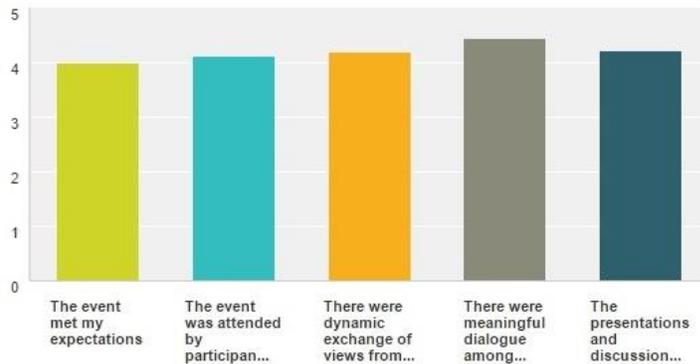
An online survey was conducted following the event to collect feedback from the participants. The survey gathered information such as what participants liked about the dialogue, how were they planning to apply the knowledge exchange upon return and areas of improvement. Further information follows:

### Q1. Please rate, with 5 the highest rating and 1 the lowest rating

1. The event met my expectations
2. The event was attended by participants from wide-range of backgrounds
3. There were dynamic exchange of views from among participants
4. There were meaningful dialogue among participants
5. The presentations and discussions improved my understanding on the issues and topics brought by event

### Please rate, with 5 the highest rating and 1 the lowest rating

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



	Disagree -1	2	3	4	Agree -5	Total	Weighted Average
▼ The event met my expectations	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	10.00% 1	50.00% 5	30.00% 3	10	4.00
▼ The event was attended by participants from wide-range of backgrounds	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	62.50% 5	25.00% 2	8	4.13
▼ There were dynamic exchange of views from among participants	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	40.00% 4	40.00% 4	10	4.20
▼ There were meaningful dialogue among participants	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	55.56% 5	44.44% 4	9	4.44
▼ The presentations and discussions improved my understanding on the issues and topics brought by event	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	22.22% 2	33.33% 3	44.44% 4	9	4.22

Q2. What did you like most about the event?

## What did you like most about the event?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

Showing 10 responses

The Problem tree analysis and country level experience sharing sessions

1/17/2017 3:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

group discussion and brainstorming sessions among the participants

1/16/2017 3:00 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

All event

1/13/2017 2:57 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

To meet with academics and practitioners working on the issue of migration and agriculture

1/6/2017 7:10 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Sharing of experiences from different countries and the field visit which added a practical experience for us to witness the change in rural China.

1/3/2017 9:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Fieldwork

12/29/2016 8:29 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

cases from different countries

12/26/2016 9:49 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

transcultural communication

12/25/2016 7:53 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The field trip was very good

12/24/2016 7:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

country comparative

12/24/2016 11:35 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q3. What do you think still needs improvement?

## What do you think still needs improvement?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

Showing 9 responses

Invite more policy makers from government

1/17/2017 3:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Disucssion session after each presentation should be integrated and the number of presentations should be reduced and more time should be allocated to capture the facts.

1/16/2017 3:00 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Structure of the workshop - less presentations and more structured discussions. Since the dialogue has just started, perhaps it is better to start with joint TOC workshop on how the network together address the issues of migration and agriculture.

1/6/2017 7:10 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Not that I did not enjoy the travels but if I have to point out to something, may be the travel time was a bit more.

1/3/2017 9:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Invite more people who are working directly on migration and rural change

12/29/2016 8:29 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

focus discussion on relevant of natural resource tenure in relation to migration,poverty reduction and human rights

12/26/2016 9:49 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

following up activities is highly appreciated

12/25/2016 7:53 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

There is a need to identify a wider group of people who better understand where migration fits into agriculture development

12/24/2016 7:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

we need more theoretical thinking

12/24/2016 11:35 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q.4. How would this event help address issues faced in your country?

## How would this event help address issues faced in your country?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

Showing 9 responses

---

Provided me a lot of knowledge on where to focus further research

1/17/2017 3:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

This event gave an insight into the effect of migration on agriculture which could be addressed in the future and to mainstream migration into development sectors.

1/16/2017 3:00 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

Experience from other countries could be useful for our country reflexion

1/13/2017 2:57 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

At this point in time not so much, but I have met some people with whom I want to keep contact for potential collaboration in future.

1/6/2017 7:10 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

With high rate of out-migration from my country, it is only a matter of time when the population distribution will be similar to what we witnessed in our fieldwork in rural China with largely the aged population left behind. The discussions from this workshop would give strong evidence for the need to address issues related to agrarian change and population dynamics resulting from mass out-migration and/or urbanization.

1/3/2017 9:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

may provide support for dialogue between researchers and policy makers

12/26/2016 9:49 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

migration and agriculture development is key issue, to learn stories and experience in other countries can help us to understand the similarities between different Asian countries

12/25/2016 7:53 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

This should help Lao researchers better understand that migration is a key concern to look at one designing actions

12/24/2016 7:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

to identify the stage and development situation

12/24/2016 11:35 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

---

Q5. How would this event help address issues at regional level?

## How would this event help address issues at regional level?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

Showing 9 responses

The network created at the conference will be a strong support to generate the interest of government departments in countries to focus on issues related to migration and plan policies accordingly in agriculture development and other allied sectors

1/17/2017 3:17 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

It convinced that collaboration among the governments and research are important steps to address issues at regional level.

1/16/2017 3:00 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Can formulate some options for more integrated solutions to face the problems on migration issue

1/13/2017 2:57 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Not necessarily about the event but the network has a potential to address issues at the regional level. I nonetheless think that the purpose and the activity of the network should be brainstormed and clarified at the very beginning for the network to be effective.

1/6/2017 7:10 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The situation we learnt among the Asian countries present in the workshop resonates with the changes taking place around the Asian region. The issues raised at the workshop will provide strong background and input to any related work (research, program, or policies) at the Asian level.

1/3/2017 9:42 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

By creating robust and sustainable knowledge network

12/26/2016 9:49 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

comparative research would be possible for participants to initiative

12/25/2016 7:53 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Migraiton is a huge regional issue but not necessarily regarding impacts on home coutry agriculture.

12/24/2016 7:01 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

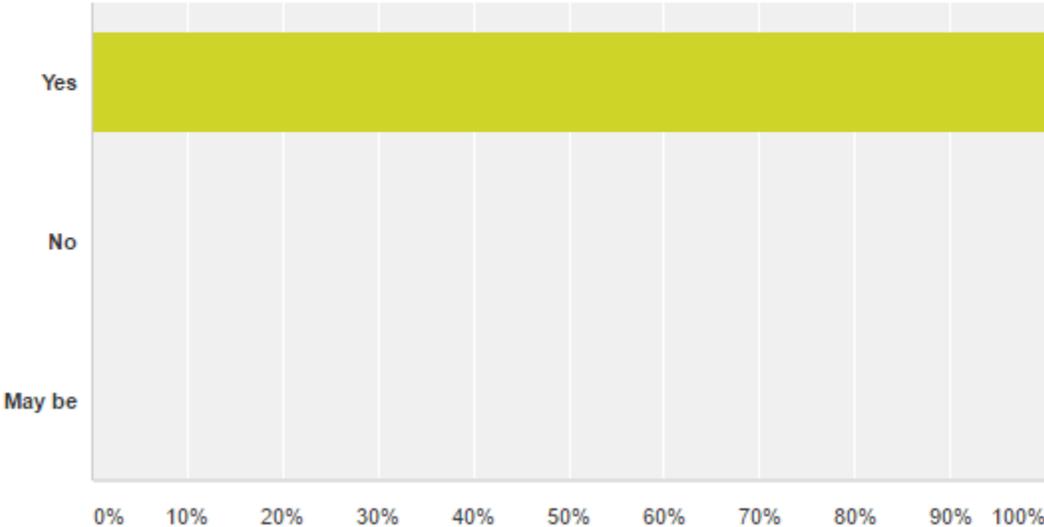
it shows the diversity of impact of migration

12/24/2016 11:35 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q.6 Will you attend this event again next year if held annually?

### Will you attend this event again next year if held annually?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



## Appendix 5: Participant List

S no	Country	Organisation	Name	Designation	Email Id
1	Nepal	CESLAM	Amrita Limbu	Senior Research Associate	alimbu@ceslam.org; limbuamr@gmail.com
2	Laos	National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Vientiane, Laos	Chanphasouk Tanthaphone	Director	tchanphasouk@yahoo.com
3	Thailand	Puay Ungpakorn School of Development Studies, Thammasat University	Soimart Rungmanee		soimart.r@gmail.com; baitoey@hotmail.com
4	London	SOAS	Peter Mollinga	Professor of Development Studies	pm35@soas.ac.uk
5	Myanmar	IOM	Michiko Ito	Programme Manager	mito@iom.int
6	Myanmar	Centre for Economic & Social Development	Khun Moe Htun	Research Associate	khunmoehtun.cesd@gmail.com
7	Myanmar	Centre for Economic & Social Development	Zaw Min Naing (self funded)	Research Associate	zawminnaing.cesd@gmail.com
8	Myanmar	UNOPS - LIFT	Ms Thet Hnin Aye	Migration Officer	ThethninA@unops.org
9	Sri Lanka	Wayamba University Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management Makandura, Gonawila, Sri Lanka	Dr. W.J.S.K. Weerakkody	Senior Lecturer	wjskweera@gmail.com
10	Indonesia	ICRAF	Elok Mulyoutami	Researcher on Gender, Local Knowledge and Social Science Trees, Agroforest Management, and Marketing Unit	E.Mulyoutami@cgiar.org
11	India	State Planning Commission, Govt of Chattisgarh	Prof Dinesh K Marothia	Member,	dkmarothia@gmail.com
12	Laos	Mekong Research Futures Institute	Dr. John Ward		john.ward@merfi.org
13	China	SCAU	Dr. Liu Yiming	associate professor in college of economics and management	

14	China	Zhongnan University of Economics and Law	Prof Ding Shijun		
15	China	Bureau of Agri of Guangzhou local government	Mr. Xiong Gangchu		
16	China	SCAU	Prof Wan Junyi		
17	China	China Agricultural University	Prof Lu Jixia		lujx@cau.edu.cn
18	Thailand	SEI	Miaojie Sun (self funded)	Programme Assistant	miaojie.sun@sei-international.org
19	China	SCAU	Prof Chen Fengbo		cfb@scau.edu.cn
20	Nepal	IWMI	Fraser Sugden	IWMI Nepal Office Head and Senior Researcher	f.sugden@cgiar.org
21	Nepal	IWMI	Andrew Reckers	Communications Intern	a.reckers@cgiar.org
22	India	IWMI	Nirmal Sigtia	Administrative and Finance	n.sigtia@cgiar.org
23	India	IWMI	Farah Ahmed	Coordinator for reseearch into impact - Asia	f.ahmad@cgiar.org
24	India	IWMI	Nitasha Nair	Senior Communication officer	n.nair@cgiar.org
25	Ethiopia	IWMI	Alan Nicol	Theme Leader	a.nicol@cgiar.org
26	Laos	WLE	Michael Victor	Knowledge Mangement	m.victor@cgiar.org
27	India	IWMI	Panchali Saikia	Scientific Officer- Social Sciences	p.saikia@cgiar.org

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following organizations for their participation in the conference:

- CESLAM
- National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Laos
- Thammasat University
- SOAS
- IOM
- Centre for Economic & Social Development
- UNOPS – LIFT
- Wayamba University
- ICRAF
- State Planning Commission, Government of Chattisgarh
- Mekong Research Futures Institute (MERFI)
- Zhongnan University of Economics and Law
- Bureau of Agriculture, Guangzhou local Government
- China Agriculture University

Special thanks to Peter Mollinga, Fraser Sugden and Alan Nicol for their inputs to the report

The report was prepared by Andrew Reckers, Farah Ahmed, Nitasha Nair and Panchali Saikia

For more information on IWMI's work on migration, please visit

**<http://migrationmatters.iwmi.org>**, or contact Fraser Sugden, Senior researcher, at [f.sugden@cgiar.org](mailto:f.sugden@cgiar.org), Andrew Reckers, IWMI communications, at [a.reckers@cgiar.org](mailto:a.reckers@cgiar.org) or Nitasha Nair, Senior Communications Officer, at [n.nair@cgiar.org](mailto:n.nair@cgiar.org)

Copyright © 2017, by IWMI. All rights reserved. IWMI encourages the use of its material provided that the organization is acknowledged and kept informed in all such instances.



IWMI is a member of the CGIAR Consortium and leads the:



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON  
**Water, Land and Ecosystems**

**IWMI Headquarters**  
127 Sunil Mawatha, Pelawatte, Battaramulla, Colombo, Sri Lanka  
*Mailing address:* P. O. Box 2075, Colombo, Sri Lanka  
Tel: +94 11 2880000, 2784080  
Email: [iwmi@cgiar.org](mailto:iwmi@cgiar.org)  
Fax: +94 11 2786854  
Website: [www.iwmi.org](http://www.iwmi.org)