



# MIGRATION AS A CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

## Challenges & Opportunities for USAID Programming

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate variability and change are increasingly contributing to, and in some cases suppressing, human migration. Climate-related migration ranges from a proactive adaptation strategy to forced displacement in the face of life-threatening risks. While climate-related displacement is a critical issue, this report explores the particular case of migration as a climate adaptation strategy and opportunities to support migration before it is a choice of last resort. The opportunities outlined aim to promote the agency and strengthen the capacity of individuals, households, and communities, ensuring safer and more productive migration with dignity. This report seeks to reframe existing discourses about migration, positioning mobility as a potentially positive response to existing or anticipated climate impacts to livelihoods, food security, and livability of particular areas. As such, the scope of the report is limited to migration that is proactive and internal or, if cross-border, conducted along regular migration pathways. The purpose of this report is to:

- Explore existing programs and policies that approach migration as an adaptation strategy and
- Identify opportunities for USAID that harness the benefits and minimize the risks of migration as a climate adaptation strategy.

### **CLIMATE-RELATED MIGRATION IS COMPLEX, MULTICAUSAL, AND CONTEXTUAL.**

Climate shocks and stresses exert additional stress on communities already facing pressures such as limited economic opportunities, social or political marginalization, poor governance, and degraded natural resources. Climate interacts with this range of factors that together can trigger or suppress mobility. While the motivations and processes involved in migration are highly variable, contextually diverse, and situationally specific, climate-driven shifts in food and water security, extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and more are increasingly playing a role. Estimating and predicting the number of climate-related migrants is difficult given that many do not identify climate shocks or stresses as the primary driver of movement.

**PROACTIVE MIGRATION CAN SERVE AS AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY AND SUPPORT HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.** Migration occurs on a spectrum of voluntary to forced movement, depending in part on the nature of the factors leading to migration (i.e., migration drivers) and migrants' abilities to plan for and fund a successful migration. Voluntary and proactive migration can benefit migrants, their households, sending communities, and receiving communities. Benefits include livelihood diversification, increased income and remittances, and knowledge and skills transfer. Receiving communities can benefit from an increased labor pool and an influx of migrant spending and support services.

**MIGRATION INVOLVES RISKS AND CHALLENGES FOR MIGRANTS AND SENDING AND RECEIVING COMMUNITIES.** Migration can put migrants at risk of exploitation, trafficking, and a lack of access to basic services. Additionally, migration can strain services and natural resources in receiving communities, especially those that lack institutional capacity and sufficient resources. In sending communities, migration can lead to depopulation, family disintegration, loss of labor, and unintended consequences related to an influx of remittances.

### **THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR FACES CONCEPTUAL AND POLITICAL BARRIERS TO ENACTING PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT MIGRATION AS AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY.**

Conceptually, migration has often been viewed as a signal of development failure, rather than one of adaptation and development. Politically, migration has been framed as a security threat, promoting

concerns about increased crime and resource scarcity. Migration continues to be primarily viewed as an undesirable result of climate change rather than as an adaptation strategy.

**WITH USAID’S REACH AND HISTORY OF RELEVANT PROGRAMMING, THE AGENCY IS UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO SUPPORT MIGRATION AS AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY.**

Migration has the potential to serve as an important adaptation and risk management strategy for climate-impacted populations. As such, there is a need for programming to match this reality.

Opportunities for support occur throughout a migrant’s journey including: (1) pre-journey preparation, (2) the journey itself, (3) reception and integration into the receiving community, and (4) potential return to the sending community. Given the potentially cyclical nature of migration, migrants may move in and out of different phases of the journey over time. The needs and risks that arise during these phases underscore intervention points for USAID programming. Across these phases, information exchange is critical for helping people make informed decisions about their rights, learn new systems, and raise concerns and ask questions. Specific opportunities include:

- **PRE-JOURNEY PREPARATION:** Programs designed to assist in the pre-journey phase can help migrants prepare and ensure that those remaining at home can manage without them. Programming may also be needed to assist those unable to move out of harm’s way.
  - Climate, possible destinations, and other information to inform migration decisions
  - Job, literacy, numeracy, and financial skills training that increase migrants’ eligibility for employment opportunities in their destination communities
- **JOURNEY:** During the migrant’s journey, programming can help ensure personal safety and provide access to health services, food, water, and shelter.
  - Safe access to health services, shelter, food, and water through local partnerships along migration pathways
  - Skills training and financial assistance for family members remaining at home
- **RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION:** Once a migrant reaches their destination, program opportunities are related to the receiving community’s systems, structures, and services; the community’s ability and willingness to incorporate migrant populations; and supporting communication between migrants and family members remaining at home.
  - Remittance facilitation
  - Co-financing mechanisms that leverage remittance investments
  - Urban resilience programming that includes a migrant lens
  - Social cohesion programming among migrants and receiving communities
- **RETURN:** The needs of a returning migrant can vary depending on the degree to which the migrant was successful in meeting their migration goals. Programming can help reintegrate migrants into their families and sending communities.
  - Support migrants to share new knowledge and skills with their home community
- **OVERARCHING OPPORTUNITIES:** There are a number of opportunities that span several phases of the migrant’s journey, such as relevant adaptation and migration policy, information sharing, and expanding access to health services and other safety nets between and across locations.
  - Supporting policies and policy coherence for safer, more productive migration
  - Information sharing through a digital Migratory Assistance Network
  - Mobile safety nets that provide access to social services across location

**MIGRATION IS NOT AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE DUE TO PRE-EXISTING VULNERABILITIES, A LACK OF RESOURCES, OR SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES.**

Climate impacts can deplete income and assets and suppress migration. This is a particular concern where populations face compounding and intersectional factors that diminish the ability to move. Those unable to move out of harm's way due to physical, social, and economic barriers are in particular need of support to migrate or adapt in place.

**MIGRATION CAN STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF INDIVIDUALS, HOUSEHOLDS, AND COMMUNITIES AND IMPROVE CLIMATE RESILIENCE.** Migration outcomes, however, depend on how effectively institutions, policies, and programs are able to support migrants and communities and leverage the benefits of mobility. The programming opportunities presented in this report are designed to increase the benefits and reduce the risks throughout the migration journey for migrants and sending and receiving communities.



## INTRODUCTION

Climate variability and change are increasingly contributing to, and in some cases suppressing, human migration and displacement. Climate impacts exert additional stress on communities already facing pressures such as limited economic opportunities, social or political marginalization, poor governance, and degraded natural resources. While the motivations and processes involved in migration are highly variable, contextually diverse, and situationally specific, climate-driven shifts in food and water security, extreme weather events, and sea-level rise are increasingly playing a role in human mobility.

Climate-related migration ranges from a proactive adaptation strategy to forced displacement in the face of life-threatening risks. Most climate-related migration occurs within national borders, has urban destinations, and ranges from seasonal to permanent movement. By 2050, modeling suggests that the interaction of climate impacts with other pressures could lead to potentially hundreds of millions of new internal migrants. While migration is often framed as an adaptation and development failure, human mobility has a long history of use as a livelihood diversification and risk management strategy. Evidence demonstrates a range of benefits from migration, for migrants as well as sending and receiving communities, including economic development.

With migration potentially serving as an important adaptation and risk management strategy for climate impacted populations, there is a need for programming to match this reality. Programming options can help address the needs of those who wish to move before it is a decision of last resort or people become trapped in climate vulnerable situations without the resources to undertake migration.

## SCOPE

This report focuses on migration as a climate adaptation strategy. While climate-related displacement is a critical issue, this report addresses proactive migration as a response to the interplay of climate stressors and other migration drivers. In this paper, we use the term “proactive migration” to mean migration that involves an anticipatory risk assessment and a decision to migrate before it is an option of last resort. Proactive migration is in contrast to reactive or survival migration which is a response after the occurrence of a shock (See Annex I for definitions of key terms). Since most climate-related migration is expected to be internal, this report is most concerned with supporting movements within countries. In the case of cross-border movements, this report will limit its analysis to regular migration pathways. In summary, this report focuses on:

- Proactive migration and
- Internal and regular cross-border migration.

This paper does not directly address planned relocation, managed retreat, forced displacement, or transhumance (e.g., pastoral migration), although some of the identified opportunities may apply to these situations. A wealth of other literature focuses on climate-related migration and displacement more broadly, including USAID’s [People on the Move: Strengthening Adaptation Responses to Support Human Movement in a Changing Climate](#). In addition, USAID has decades of relevant experience addressing forced displacement through humanitarian assistance programming.

## PURPOSE

The program and policy opportunities outlined in this paper aim to promote the agency and strengthen the capacity of individuals, households, and communities to ensure safer and more productive migration with dignity. The identified opportunities have been selected for their ability to support migrants’ agency to decide if, when, and where they migrate and support proactive decision making that enhances the benefits of migration and mitigates risks. While recognizing the challenges and risks of migration, these opportunities aim to emphasize peoples’ ability and agency to make decisions in the face of changing climate conditions.

USAID has begun programming in this vein through efforts such as Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE I & II) and the [Development Innovation Ventures](#) award for Planning for Productive Migration in Niger. Support for migration as an adaptation strategy aligns with work through organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Any implementation of activities to support migration as an adaptation strategy should align with [USAID’s Climate Strategy](#) including the foundational principles for equity and inclusion and locally-led development. The purpose of this report is to:

- Explore existing programs and policies that approach migration as an adaptation strategy and
- Identify opportunities for USAID that harness the benefits and minimize the risks of migration as a climate adaptation strategy.



## **CLIMATE-RELATED MIGRATION: AN OVERVIEW**

Climate-related migration is a complex and contextual phenomenon influenced by the interaction of climate variability and change with a range of other migration factors. The distances people migrate and the duration of their mobility differ widely depending on specific circumstances. In addition, climate impacts that affect human wellbeing are increasingly both accelerating and suppressing migration depending on household and community contexts. While these impacts are expected to increase migration flows, particularly within countries, migration suppression is also a growing concern, especially among the most marginalized groups.<sup>1,2</sup> The inability to migrate due to limited resources and liquidity threatens to further increase poverty and reduce resilience among households and communities.

### **CLIMATE AS A CONTEXTUAL DRIVER OF MOBILITY**

As climate change impacts intensify, slow-onset and sudden-onset events are increasingly inducing migration and displacement. Slow onset events, including drought and sea-level rise, develop incrementally over time. Sudden onset events, such as tropical storms, arise rapidly, often with limited warning.<sup>3</sup> When these climate impacts negatively affect peoples' health, safety, and livelihoods, they can trigger or suppress human mobility.<sup>4</sup> Climate change is not the single driver of this movement but rather interacts with economic, social, political, and demographic factors such as poverty, unemployment, weak governance, and conflict. Interacting factors can accumulate to create "tipping points" that make migration appear a more appealing option than struggling to adapt in place.<sup>5</sup> Modeling suggests that areas with lower water availability and crop productivity and areas affected by sea-level rise and storm surges are most likely to experience increased climate-related migration.<sup>6</sup>



## SPATIAL, TEMPORAL, AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Climate-related migration is expected to be primarily internal with individuals moving within their home country. Consistent with general migration trends, people who migrate due to climate-related factors, particularly slow-onset events, tend to move from rural to urban areas and follow existing migration pathways developed from cultural linkages, historical ties, and migrant networks.<sup>7</sup> When movement is cross-border, individuals may travel through regular or irregular pathways. Whether internal or cross border, such movement can be temporary, seasonal, circular, or permanent.<sup>8</sup> These temporal and spatial characteristics are dynamic and can change as circumstances evolve. For example, what begins as temporary migration may become permanent if livelihood challenges and environmental degradation persist in the sending community.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, migration may begin with short-distance movements to a nearby city, but then evolve into a longer distance movement to other urban centers where future opportunities are more widely available.<sup>10</sup>

Estimating the number of people on the move due to climate-related factors is challenging due to the uncertainties of how climate change will manifest in particular areas, the direction of development and greenhouse gas emissions trajectories, and the multiple reasons behind migration. The World Bank's efforts to project climate-related migration have resulted in a broad estimate that between 44.2 and 216.1 million people across six regions will migrate internally by 2050.<sup>11</sup> Given the multiple reasons behind migration, it can also be challenging to differentiate climate-related migration from economic migration.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, it is easier to track displacement because there is a more direct link between sudden-onset events and movement.<sup>13</sup> In 2020, 30.7 million people were displaced by environmental hazards and approximately 98 percent of these were weather-related disasters such as storms and floods. In contrast, in 2020, 9.8 million people were displaced by conflict and violence.<sup>14</sup>

A migrant's reason for mobility differs from person to person, as do their demographic characteristics. Below is a partial list of some general characteristics that affect climate-related migrants, though each depend on unique, contextual factors. These factors also often intersect in complex and nuanced ways.

**GENDER:** In general, studies show that men are more likely to migrate due to climate related factors than women.<sup>15,16,17,18</sup> For example, in Bangladesh, men often migrate during lean periods (the time between harvests when food stocks are insufficient to meet household needs) leaving women to care for the family.<sup>19</sup> Drought in Ethiopia has triggered increased long-distance labor-related male mobility but reduced female migration.<sup>20</sup> Although most migrants are male, some countries are seeing an increase in female migration and the gender composition of migrants varies significantly by country. For example, one study revealed that just three percent of climate-related migrants in Bangladesh were women in contrast to 38 percent in India.<sup>21</sup>

**AGE:** Studies find that youth and young adults are more likely to migrate due to changing climate conditions. Youth between the ages of 15 and 25 were the most likely to migrate in response to droughts or hurricanes in Northern Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>22</sup> and South Africa.<sup>23</sup> Gender may also influence the relationship between age and migration. For example, one study found that mobility peaked at a younger age for women than for men.<sup>24</sup> While most migrants may be youth and young adults, recent trends in Central America's Dry Corridor show a rising number of accompanied and unaccompanied children migrating.<sup>25</sup>

**EDUCATION:** Studies show that education may affect whether individuals stay in place, migrate, or become displaced. Research on climate-related displacement in South America suggests that those who have not finished primary school are more likely to be displaced.<sup>26</sup> Another study of climate-related mobility in Africa found that those who had completed primary education were twice as likely to migrate.<sup>27</sup> A lack of education could increase susceptibility to displacement while education can lead to more transferable skills and the ability to afford migration-related expenses.<sup>28</sup>

**SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS:** Individuals with higher socioeconomic status tend to have more resources to support migration, although the association between wealth and mobility is mixed. In Bangladesh, wealthier and more educated households were more likely to participate in planned migration than poor households.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, in Zambia, most climate-related migration originated from wealthier districts while poor districts experienced less migration.<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, in Central America, most migrants are in a middle socioeconomic status and there are low rates of migration from wealthier households.<sup>31</sup>

**LIVELIHOOD:** Studies suggest that households with livelihoods that depend on natural resources, such as agriculture, pastoralism, and fisheries, are more likely to migrate.<sup>32,33</sup> For example, a study in India found that farmers decided to migrate as a coping strategy due to perceived changes in climate conditions and the risks of crop failure.<sup>34</sup>

**HOUSEHOLD PROFILE:** Studies demonstrate that the likelihood of climate-related migration rises as household size increases.<sup>35,36</sup> A study of drought-related migration from rural Ethiopia explained that this relationship could be due to a “crowding effect” where a strain on resources leads to increased mobility.<sup>37</sup> Large households with surplus labor may encourage members to seek alternative employment opportunities elsewhere to boost the family’s income.<sup>38</sup> Household composition and age structure may also play a role. For example, one study in India found that a larger proportion of women and children positively affected migration.<sup>39</sup>



## MIGRATION AS ADAPTION

Climate-related mobility is typically categorized as displacement, migration, or planned relocation.<sup>40</sup> Displacement, or forced migration, often occurs after sudden-onset climate-related events that severely damage infrastructure and push individuals to immediately seek refuge elsewhere. This movement is often temporary and across short distances.<sup>41</sup> While slow-onset changes to the environment that disrupt lives and livelihoods can also lead to displacement, or the inability to move, these changes may motivate people to move proactively, before their situations become dire.<sup>42,43</sup>

Proactive migration can take the form of migration by individuals and families or the planned relocation of partial or full communities. A person's level of agency to decide if, when, and where they move often falls somewhere along the voluntary to forced continuum<sup>44,45,46</sup> and depends on a multitude of factors, including aspirations, risk aversion, and access to financial and social capital.<sup>47</sup>

When proactive migration in response to climate impacts provides positive outcomes and improves migrants' resilience, it is considered adaptation.<sup>48</sup> Research finds that the more agency migrants have (i.e., voluntary migration and freedom of movement), the greater the potential benefits of migration.<sup>49,50</sup> In contrast, when migration is a choice of last resort (i.e., when people's assets are already diminished), these benefits are more difficult to realize. A migrant that embarks on their journey with minimal agency and a shorter planning horizon is less likely to have the resources and preparation to be successful. Meanwhile, a migrant with a higher level of agency and a longer planning and preparation time is more able to pursue proactive migration.

## Migration – Adaptation and Maladaptation

Migration can have both positive and negative effects on household wellbeing. A study across eight countries examined outcomes of migration that was linked to managing the risks of rainfall variability and food security.\* Households that had access to diverse livelihood opportunities and implemented a variety of adaptation or risk management strategies were able to use migration to strengthen their resilience through food and cash remittances. Conversely, households with limited assets (i.e., land), little livelihood diversification, and limited education were either unable to migrate or suffered heightened vulnerability and food insecurity as a result of migration. In many cases, households experienced a mixture of positive and negative outcomes. Migration that improved households' resilience was usually undertaken by young migrants in their early 20s. Meanwhile, erosive migration was often undertaken by the head of households in their mid-40s.<sup>51</sup>

*\*Peru, Guatemala, Ghana, Tanzania, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Vietnam*

## BENEFITS OF PROACTIVE MIGRATION

Proactive migration of individuals and households through safe and orderly channels has numerous benefits for migrants and their households, sending communities, and receiving communities. Proactive migration can help households build their resilience before the intensity and frequency of climate impacts deplete household assets and resources making in situ adaptation impossible and human movement difficult to effectively manage. Migrants are often motivated by the economic advantages of migration, which allow them to diversify their income sources and spread risk.<sup>52,53</sup> In addition to supporting livelihood diversification, migration can allow individuals to pursue new education opportunities that are unavailable in their home communities.<sup>54</sup>

**EXPANDED AND DIVERSIFIED LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES:** In the face of climate impacts, the ability to access livelihoods resilient to these impacts is key. Migration can provide an important option for accessing new and diverse livelihood options, seasonally or longer-term, that remain viable through climate shocks and stresses. Migration can enhance livelihood security, income, and opportunities for skill development among migrants while remittances can support resilience in sending households.

**REMITTANCES:** Remittances serve as an important source of income diversification for migrant households.<sup>55,56</sup> By providing households with a financial buffer, remittances help families to cope with future shocks and stresses, including disaster impacts.<sup>57</sup> The economic benefits of remittances are not limited to just migrant households, but can also benefit the broader sending community through social networks and spillover effects.<sup>58</sup> In contrast to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which can fluctuate significantly, remittances tend to be a more reliable source of financial capital for developing countries.<sup>59</sup> Despite predictions that remittances would fall due to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, remittances proved to be resilient.<sup>60</sup>

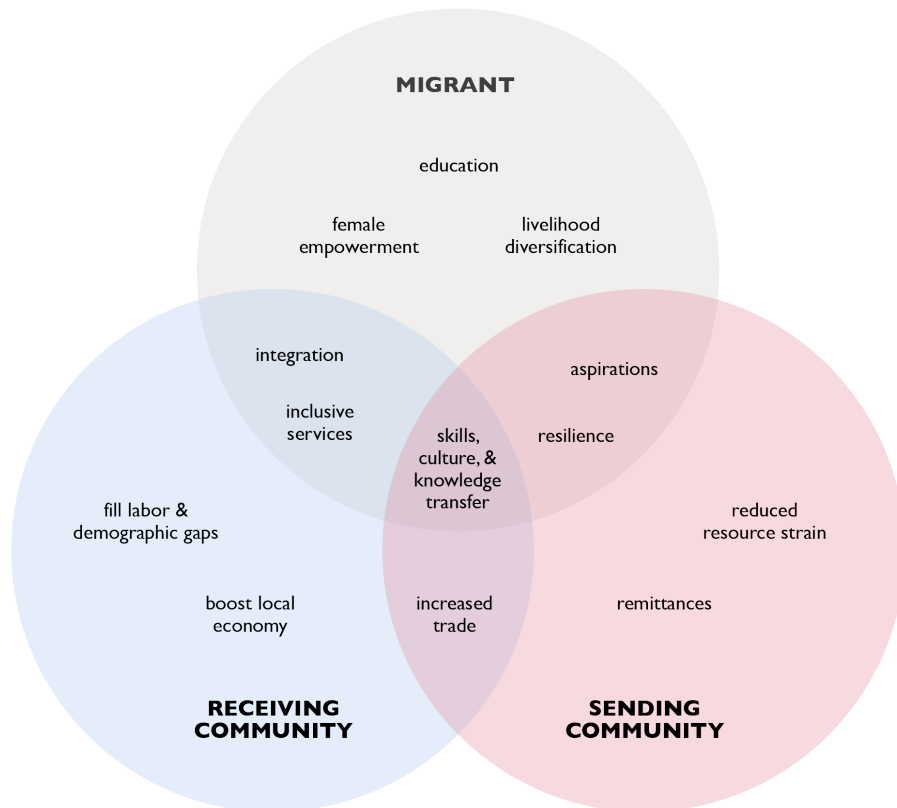
The amount of remittances is also significant. For international remittances, the value transferred to low and middle-income countries in 2020 surpassed the combined sum of ODA and FDI.<sup>61</sup> Estimates of the total volume of remittances from internal migration are rare due to the lower attention paid to internal migration and the fact that these domestic transactions are more difficult to capture. Research in Ghana and India, however, found that internal remittances exceeded international remittances in both

countries.<sup>62</sup> Compared to other sources of funding like ODA and FDI, remittances are better able to reach remote communities<sup>63</sup> and the most vulnerable households.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, without external oversight and conditional requirements, households have greater choice in how to spend their remittances.<sup>65</sup>

**EXCHANGE:** The exchange of knowledge, skills, and culture can also benefit sending and receiving communities.<sup>66</sup> For example, a study in India found that the collective contribution of remittances, knowledge, resources, and networks helped migrant households strengthen their adaptation capacity.<sup>67</sup> Migrants brought back information to their sending communities that supported livelihoods and aided in decision making. Migrants and their households also shared this knowledge through their family and neighbor networks creating a positive spillover effect.

**ECONOMIC ACTIVITY:** For receiving communities, migration can fill labor and demographic gaps, smoothing market imbalances. Migrants can also help boost the local economy by creating demand, increasing trade between sending and receiving communities,<sup>68</sup> and starting new businesses.<sup>69</sup> In some cases, governments can also attract funding to support migrants. Where these funds are used to invest in public infrastructure and services, such as health care facilities, receiving communities can also benefit.<sup>70</sup>

**FIGURE 1: THE BENEFITS OF MIGRATION AS AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY**



## CHALLENGES FOR PROACTIVE MIGRATION

While there are multiple opportunities to better meet the needs of migrants and sending and receiving communities, there remain key challenges for proactive migration strategies. Migration can put migrants at risk of exploitation, trafficking, and a lack of access to basic services. Further, migrants can experience distress and negative mental health outcomes due to family separation, isolation, and discrimination.<sup>71</sup> Migration can also negatively impact sending communities and strain resources in receiving communities. The development community also faces challenges in overcoming barriers to supporting migration as an adaptation strategy.

**CAPACITY OF RECEIVING COMMUNITIES:** A pressing concern for many governments is balancing the needs of migrants with those of receiving communities. Many city governments are unprepared to meet the needs of growing migrant populations due to poor urban planning, weak governance, and limited resources and capacity.<sup>72</sup> Under-resourced urban areas mean that migrants often face a lack of services, food insecurity, and insufficient livelihood opportunities.<sup>73,74</sup> For localities that already have limited institutional capacity and resources, migrants can further strain infrastructure, services, and natural resources. This can lead to tension between migrants and receiving communities<sup>75</sup> and result in xenophobia and discrimination.<sup>76</sup>

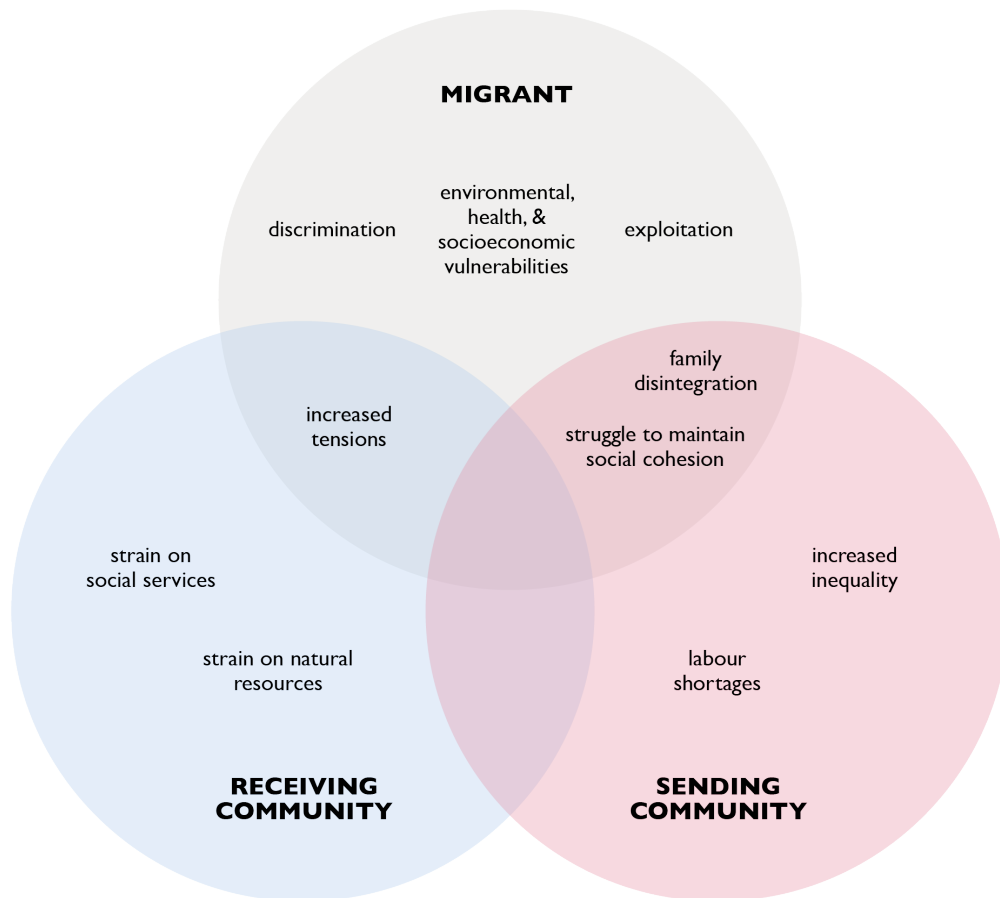
**CLIMATE RISK IN RECEIVING COMMUNITIES:** Migrants to urban areas often face limited housing options and resort to living in informal settlements at risk from excessive heat, flooding, landslides, and sea-level rise.<sup>77</sup> In climate-vulnerable urban and peri-urban areas, migrants may escape hazards in their home communities only to confront new risks in their destinations. Over 90 percent of urban areas are coastal, for example, leaving large populations vulnerable to the effects of sea-level rise.<sup>78</sup>

**ALTERED IDENTITIES OF SENDING COMMUNITIES:** In sending communities, migration can lead to family disintegration,<sup>79</sup> dissolve social safety networks, and significantly alter demographic compositions. Depopulation may create labor and skill shortages that adversely affect the local economy.<sup>80</sup> Migration from agricultural communities can lead to labor shortages during critical planting and harvesting periods, impacting food production.<sup>81</sup> In areas where migrants are predominantly male, migration can result in the feminization of communities.<sup>82</sup> While this can give women more decision making power,<sup>83</sup> it can also overburden women who are forced to take on additional responsibilities.<sup>84</sup> As more individuals leave, communities may struggle to maintain social cohesion and traditional livelihoods important to communities' cultural identities.<sup>85</sup>

**UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF REMITTANCES:** While remittances are a key benefit for sending communities, they can have drawbacks and some economists warn of a “remittance trap.” This can occur when sending economies get stuck in a “lower-growth, higher-migration treadmill,” exacerbated by the loss of human capital and reduced incentives to work. Some further theorize that the influx of remittances can reduce pressure on local governments to provide critical services to citizens.<sup>86</sup> This effect can be intensified if migration deprives sending communities of the very voices needed to fight for better services.<sup>87</sup> There are also concerns about climate-related migration contributing to inequality in sending communities among those who do and do not receive remittances.<sup>88</sup> Children that receive remittances and whose parents migrate may also be more vulnerable to targeted violence.<sup>89</sup>

**BARRIERS TO ACTION IN THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR:** The development sector faces conceptual and political barriers to working with partner governments to facilitate migration as an adaptation strategy. Historically, migration has often been perceived as a development failure, whereas reduced migration is considered an indicator of program success.<sup>90,91</sup> Development programs tend to disincentivize migration, preferring to target people in fixed locations.<sup>92</sup> In National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and National Determined Contributions (NDCs), migration continues to be presented largely as something to prevent and discourage,<sup>93</sup> revealing that migration is often overlooked in adaptation planning. Politically, migration is often framed as a threat to physical or economic security. Migrants are frequently blamed for taking jobs, abusing public benefits, and overexploiting resources. Security concerns also stem from the inaccurate assumption that migrants are more likely to commit crimes.<sup>94</sup> Securitization rhetoric also promotes the idea that resource scarcity will trigger conflict between receiving and migrant communities.<sup>95</sup>

**FIGURE 2: THE CHALLENGES OF MIGRATION AS AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY**





## THE MIGRANT'S JOURNEY: NEED-BASED PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

With climate impacts expected to affect mobility for up to hundreds of millions of people, making climate-related migration safer and more productive is critical for climate resilience. USAID's reach and history of relevant programming make the Agency uniquely positioned to support migration as an adaptation strategy. [USAID's Climate Strategy](#) and the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) focus on supporting adaptation among communities vulnerable to climate impacts. USAID's Climate Strategy aims to increase climate resilience for 500 million people by 2030 and includes support for "people who choose to move as a livelihood diversification, risk management, and adaptation strategy."<sup>6</sup>

Opportunities to support migration as an adaptation strategy occur throughout a migrant's journey: (1) pre-journey preparation, (2) the journey itself, (3) reception and integration into the receiving community, and (4) potential return to the sending community. A migrant's needs during the return phase will depend on the type of migration (e.g., temporary, circular, permanent). Given the potentially cyclical nature of migration, migrants may move in and out of different phases of the journey over time.

The needs and risks that arise during these phases point to potential intervention points. Across these phases, information exchange is critical for helping people make informed decisions about their rights, learn new systems, and raise concerns and ask questions. Efforts to support migration should not shift the burden of adaptation onto migrants, particularly for populations that are disproportionately affected by climate change and have contributed little to the causes of climate change.<sup>7</sup>



Critically, when people are on the move there are concerns about their protection. People are at greater risk of exploitation and trafficking when they leave their homes and communities. Efforts to support migration need to engage the appropriate expertise in program design and carefully manage these risks.

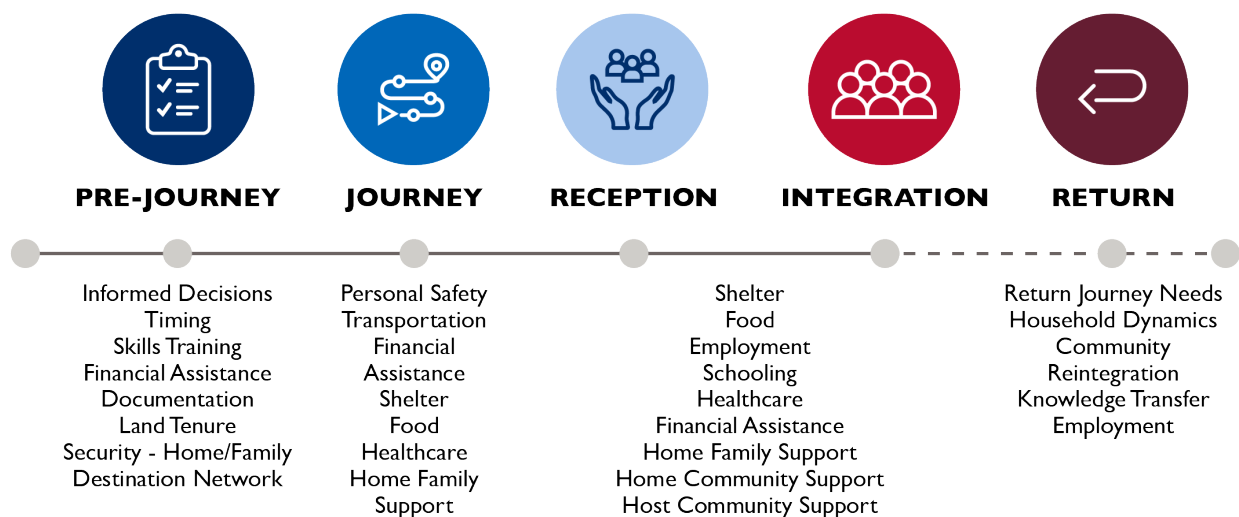
### **Piloting Migration Programming**

Pilot programs offer USAID an opportunity to assess the challenges and opportunities for improvement before launching broader programming. The following considerations can help to guide where to implement pilot programs:

- **Existing USAID programming:** Established programs can help USAID leverage existing partnerships and knowledge about contextual circumstances.
- **Tradition of migration:** Many communities have traditions of migration and well-established migrant networks. Working with these communities can build on these traditions to improve migration outcomes.
- **Strong ties with local organizations:** Working with local organizations will be instrumental for promoting migration through locally-led development.
- **Receptive partner government entities:** Government entities that are receptive to migration and testing new programs are key to working constructively in receiving communities (e.g., members of the Mayors Migration Council).
- **Climate change hotspots:** Programs can be prioritized in areas where slow-onset hazards are already negatively affecting livelihoods.
- **Regional free movement agreements:** For programs that address cross-border migration, free movement agreements can be used to promote cooperation between countries and establish regional standards that promote safe and orderly migration.

USAID's Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) supports a pilot approach to innovative development programming through a tiered-funding model. DIV promotes a process that embraces risk at the earliest stages matched with research to develop an evidence base for cost effective and scalable programming. The tiered model progresses through three stages, each with its own funding: Phase 1 - Pilot; Phase 2 - Testing and Position for Scale; and Phase 3 - Transition to Scale.

**FIGURE 3: THE MIGRANT JOURNEY AND SELECTED PHASE-SPECIFIC NEEDS**



**Note:** The dashed line illustrates that return may not always be possible or even an intended part of the migrant's journey.

### PHASE I - PRE-JOURNEY PREPARATION

In this initial phase, migrants are planning for the challenges they might face along their journey and in their destination, as well as potential challenges faced by those remaining at home. They will need funding to make the journey and establish themselves in a new community. They need information about migration destinations, the best times to migrate, the types of skills valued in target destinations, and the documentation requirements to facilitate their journey and employment. They will also need to plan how those who may remain at home (e.g., spouses, aging parents, children, and non-working adults) will manage without them. Safety and financial security are key concerns for the migrant and their families, especially in locations where women have fewer rights to property and assets.

### EXAMPLES OF CURRENT PROGRAMMING

#### TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

USAID works with country governments in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to promote legal labor migration to the United States, helping to vet potential workers for temporary employment opportunities. Programming includes training, making contact with American employers, and visa assistance.<sup>98</sup>

#### COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROGRAMMING

USAID's Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE I & II) program strengthens the resilience of chronically vulnerable populations in Burkina Faso and Niger. The program recognizes the common practice of local labor migration and aims to enhance its profitability for migrants and their families.<sup>99</sup>

## PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

**CLIMATE INFORMATION SERVICES THAT INFORM MIGRATION DECISIONS:** Seasonal migration is a common strategy used by agricultural households to spread risk and diversify income sources during periods of drought.<sup>100</sup> Climate information services, like seasonal forecasts and drought early warnings, can help households anticipate periods of low precipitation and poor agricultural production.<sup>101</sup> People can use this information to help decide if and when to migrate, which *in situ* adaptation strategies to implement, or both. Access to climate information can strengthen proactive decision making and increase households' agency.



### **JOB, LITERACY, NUMERACY, AND FINANCIAL SKILLS TRAINING THAT INCREASE MIGRANTS' ELIGIBILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THEIR DESTINATION COMMUNITIES:**

Migrants' ability to secure a decent job and thrive economically and socially in destination communities is critical to migration serving as an adaptation strategy. Many migrants, particularly those transitioning from natural resource-based livelihoods to jobs in urban settings, require skills training to prepare them for a new job market. Skills development training in sending communities can help migrants succeed in entering the labor market in destination communities. Language and cultural training may also be beneficial, particularly for longer distance or cross-border migration.

### **Mercy Corps' "Planning for Productive Migration" Project**

Mercy Corps and the Immigration Policy Lab (IPL) are implementing the pilot project "Planning for Productive Migration" (PPM) in Niger. The project is partially funded by USAID's Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) and seeks to support seasonal migration through regular pathways in West Africa. This includes training in soft skills and digital and financial basics. Training also covers the risks and benefits of migration and helps migrants prepare for various legal requirements, such as obtaining travel documents and vaccines. The project facilitates two household dialogues among migrants and family members to emphasize joint decision making. Migrants are provided a non-transferrable bus ticket to their chosen destination, which can be in any of the 15 member countries within the Economic Community of West African States. As a risk mitigation and management strategy, migrants are provided with a WhatsApp emergency hotline, a free bus ticket for voluntary return, emergency cash, and referrals to emergency service providers in receiving communities.<sup>102</sup> Mercy Corps and IPL are conducting research to evaluate project outcomes including monitoring the rates and destinations of migration, employment and consumption effects, and psychosocial wellbeing outcomes.<sup>103</sup>

## **Trapped Populations**

People can become “trapped,” unable to migrate, due to a lack of resources and/or capacity to move. Marginalized populations, including women, children, the elderly, and disabled people, face physical, economic, and social barriers that limit their ability to migrate.<sup>104</sup> For example, persons with disabilities face higher rates of poverty and food insecurity, barriers to information, and challenges to mobility during disasters.<sup>105</sup> Cultural and psychological constraints can also immobilize populations.<sup>106</sup> Households that are unable to migrate or adequately adapt in place can face repeated climate shocks and stresses that deteriorate their asset base and weaken their capacity and security.<sup>107</sup> Both voluntarily and involuntarily immobile populations require support to increase their adaptive capacity and reduce their exposure and sensitivity to climate hazards.<sup>108</sup>

### **Programming Opportunity:**

Trapped populations are in need of assistance. Programming could provide access to additional funding or skills training to address the particular conditions that are preventing people from adapting in place or moving out of harm’s way.

## **PHASE II - JOURNEY**

The journey itself can take days to months or even years depending on the migration route and length of stay in mid-point destinations. The needs and risks that arise throughout the migration journey depend on a variety of factors, including the distance, the migrant’s demographics, their familiarity with the migration route, and their access to services and social networks. Personal safety is of utmost concern, as well as means of travel, shelter and food along migration routes, and maintaining communication with family back home and networks at their destination.

Those who proactively migrate as a livelihood diversification strategy usually expect to send remittances home after they reach their destination and find employment. There is often a period of time, however, when migrants are unable to send support home (i.e., during the journey and early integration). During this time, family members remaining in sending communities may also need support.

## **EXAMPLES OF CURRENT PROGRAMMING**

### **REGIONAL SAFE MIGRATION PROGRAMMING**

USAID works with governments and NGOs in Central Asia to promote a regional approach to labor migration designed to counter trafficking in persons. For example, websites and chat bots have been created to provide information and hotlines for those planning to migrate across borders. The hotlines can also serve as a means for reporting suspected trafficking cases to local authorities.<sup>109</sup>

### **MIGRANT TRANSIT CENTERS**

IOM works with local civil society organizations in Latin America to facilitate temporary accommodation centers along migration pathways that offer migrants food, shelter, and mobile health services to meet various needs while migrants are in transit.<sup>110</sup>

## Intersectional Vulnerabilities

Migrants face unique challenges which may be compounded by their individual characteristics and social identities, such as gender, age, sexual identity, health, class, race, and ethnicity.<sup>111</sup> Policies and programs can address compounding and intersectional vulnerabilities and account for the unique challenges that different demographics face. For example, migrant children, women, and LGBTQI+ individuals face increased risks, including violence, abuse, and exploitation and more limited access to services and property rights.<sup>112,113,114</sup> Migration can also exacerbate gender inequalities in sending communities, particularly for women who become the head of their households and must take on additional labor responsibilities when men migrate.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, some women in Nepal have struggled to receive remittances due to a lack of financial literacy and limited experience navigating money transfer services.<sup>116</sup>

### **Programming Opportunity:**

Programming should seek to reach the populations with the greatest need to prevent worsening inequalities. Programs should be designed with a gender lens and targeted protection programming can increase commensurate with protection needs, including gender-based violence prevention and response.

## PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

**SUPPORT SAFE PASSAGE ALONG MIGRATION PATHWAYS:** USAID can provide technical and financial support to local organizations that offer shelter, food, drinking water, mobile health services, information and means of communication along migration routes. USAID could also work with local organizations to incorporate implemented Counter Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP) strategies in migration programming.<sup>117</sup>

**SUPPORT FOR MIGRANTS' FAMILIES IN SENDING COMMUNITIES:** Migrants' families may face a period of insecurity after migrants depart and before they are able to send remittances. This may be particularly true in cases of male migration where women staying at home face difficulties in asserting ownership over their family land, property, and assets. Improved land and resource rights and access to skills training or financing may help families while they wait for remittances.

## “No Lean Season” Case Study

To support productive migration in Bangladesh, the pilot program “No Lean Season” provided subsidized transportation costs to rural households with the aim of increasing household food consumption and income. Research found that this conditional cash transfer increased migration. The findings also revealed a spillover effect, whereby households that did not receive a subsidy were still more likely to migrate than those in control communities.<sup>118</sup> While a scaled-up version of the pilot program failed to show positive results, in part due to external variables,<sup>119</sup> it offers insight into how subsidies or loans can help households overcome financial barriers to migration.

### **PHASE III - RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION**

Migrants' needs at reception and integration are linked. During the reception phase, needs center around meeting basic needs. During the integration phase, needs relate more to the systems, services, and community absorption that will sustain migrants' needs and wellbeing over time.

Whether internal or cross-border, migrants will need to find housing and employment upon arrival. They may need assistance registering to receive public services, such as health care and education. Migrants who would like to send remittances to their family members will need to connect with money transfer services. In addition to the following examples, there are opportunities in the digital space to connect migrants with housing and employment options.

#### **EXAMPLES OF CURRENT PROGRAMMING**

##### **COMPREHENSIVE ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS AND RECEIVING COMMUNITIES**

Through the Venezuelan Response & Integration Office, USAID is supporting the Colombian government to work with migrants and receiving communities to improve access to health and education services, promote social cohesion, and strengthen local capacities.<sup>120</sup>

**REGIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEMS** USAID and other stakeholders support the Digital Regional East African Community Health (REACH) Initiative. The program was designed in response to the Ebola outbreak when cross-border movements, coupled with a lack of coordination between health information systems, created major challenges to reducing disease spread. The Digital REACH Initiative supports the free movement of people and cross-border health services through interoperable digital health systems.<sup>121</sup>

##### **PROGRAMA 3X1 PARA MIGRANTES**

Implemented since 2002, Mexico's Programa 3x1 para Migrantes provides matching grants for remittances sent to communities in Mexico by hometown associations in the United States.<sup>122</sup>

Each level of government – local, state, and federal – matches the remittance funds, which are then used to finance social infrastructure projects, community services, education, and employment generation.<sup>123</sup> See related examples in the text box on: "USAID Work with Diaspora Communities."

## Land Tenure

Land is a key variable in climate-related migration as climate impacts lead to the loss of land through sea-level rise and land degradation. A reduction in both the quantity and quality of land to support agricultural livelihoods is pushing households to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. A household's land ownership status and the security of their land tenure can incentivize or disincentivize migration. Evidence suggests that households that own land are less likely to pursue migration because they have secure economic ties to their community and thus are more likely to pursue options to adapt in place. Conversely, households that lack secure land tenure are more likely to migrate.<sup>124,125,126</sup> However, households with a severely depleted asset base, including a lack of land, may not have the resources to move and can become trapped.<sup>127</sup> The effect of land ownership on the ability and interest in migration also interacts with other socioeconomic factors. For example, marginalized groups are disproportionately excluded from land rights.<sup>128,129</sup> Additionally, having secure land tenure could potentially make people more willing to migrate if they know they won't lose access to their land while they are away. Destination areas are also facing land-related challenges as growing populations lead to greater competition for land and land tenure is often insecure.<sup>130</sup> If migrants return to sending communities, they may face unexpected difficulties finding affordable land. This may be particularly true in Africa where rural populations are expected to continue to grow in coming decades.<sup>131</sup>

### **Programming Opportunity:**

Strengthening land and resource rights can help address drivers of migration in sending communities and is key to supporting migrants and receiving communities. In sending and receiving communities, programming could include helping people access legal rights to housing, land, and property. In Somalia, for example, IOM has worked with the local government to secure land rights for IDPs through the Barwaaqo model. The work supports participating families to build homes and participants are eligible to receive a title deed after two years. Additionally, the project includes the construction of infrastructure such as a health care clinic, roads, water supply systems, and a school.<sup>132</sup>

## PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

**REMITTANCE FACILITATION:** Remittances are a key source of income for many households in rural areas. There are a number of key advantages of remittances for advancing locally-led development objectives. However, the high cost of sending remittances can disincentivize migrants from sending money home. In the last quarter of 2020, the global average cost of sending \$200 was 6.5 percent, more than double the Sustainable Development Goal target of 3 percent.<sup>133</sup> USAID could explore opportunities for working with money transfer providers to reduce costs, promote transparency, and ensure the speed and security of transfers. USAID could also work with non-traditional digital service providers and mobile money apps that might offer remittance services at more affordable rates. There may also be opportunities to encourage investment of remittances in in situ adaptation strategies that help sending communities cope with climate shocks and stresses.<sup>134</sup> While households should decide how to invest their remittances, USAID programming could offer technical and logistical assistance.

**CO-FINANCING MECHANISMS THAT LEVERAGE REMITTANCE INVESTMENTS:** Co-financing can support equitable adaptation in sending communities. Building on existing work with diaspora communities (see “Diaspora Communities” text box), USAID could match remittance investments to leverage funding for adaptation efforts and projects that benefit the broader community. This can

increase climate resilience and reduce inequalities between migrant and non-migrant households. Matching programs can help relieve the financial burden on migrants, support community adaptation and development, and engage diaspora communities.

**INTEGRATING MIGRATION IN URBAN PROGRAMMING:** Integrating migration considerations in urban programming can enhance social cohesion and resilience among migrants and receiving communities. By incorporating migrants into urban planning and budgets, governments of receiving communities can better anticipate, absorb, and meet the needs of migrants over time. These efforts can also enable communities to more readily benefit from the entrepreneurial skills and mindsets of migrants. Programs that increase services for both migrants and non-migrants can also serve to decrease tensions between migrants and receiving communities. Policies such as the New Urban Agenda and programs such as USAID’s Building Healthy Cities provide opportunities for integrating migration. Through partnerships with city governments, USAID programming could address the compounding risks of climate change and rapid urbanization, including through disaster preparedness, green jobs, participatory land use planning, expanded housing stock, expanded public services, and improved public infrastructure. Climate information is instrumental for guiding urban planning and resilience programming.

**SOCIAL COHESION PROGRAMMING AMONG MIGRANTS AND RECEIVING COMMUNITIES:** Migrants can strain infrastructure, services, and natural resources leading to tension between migrants and receiving communities.<sup>135</sup> Receiving communities may oppose the inclusion of migrants as beneficiaries of public services or employment opportunities, particularly if access is already inadequate and/or inequitable. USAID can support governments of receiving communities to more equitably meet community needs. Further, programming can support activities, campaigns and locally-led programs and organizations that aim to communicate the shared benefits of migration to strengthen trust, dialogue, and social cohesion. Access to mental health services is also key to support migrant integration.

### **USAID Work with Diaspora Communities**

Through the New Partnerships Initiative, USAID is working with diaspora communities to support and promote development objectives in countries of origin. For example, the African Diaspora Marketplace provides business advice and matches expansion capital to support businesses in sub-Saharan Africa. In Haiti, the Leveraging Effective Application of Direct Investments (LEAD) project aims to maximize the effect of remittances and encourage investment through matching grants and technical assistance to diaspora-driven small- and medium-sized enterprises.<sup>136</sup>

Through Development Innovation Ventures, USAID is helping the Haitian-American company, Jetli Transfer, improve food security in Haiti. The company helps the Haitian diaspora in the United States fund safe and reliable food services.<sup>137</sup> There are numerous additional opportunities to meet the needs of sending communities by collaboration with diaspora groups. For example, USAID’s Senegal Access Project works with diaspora members to fund sanitation projects.<sup>138</sup>

### **PHASE IV - RETURN**

The needs of returning migrants will depend on various factors, such as length of time away, demographic characteristics, household dynamics, and reason for return. Migrants might return as part



of a cyclical/temporary labor strategy or due to unsuccessful migration after an inability to find sufficient employment. Reintegration services can promote economic sufficiency and climate resilience. Returning migrants may also have skills and knowledge that they can share with their families and communities.

## EXAMPLES OF CURRENT PROGRAMMING

### RETURNED MIGRANT SUPPORT

In El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, USAID has worked with private sector partners and governments to provide skills training, employment assistance, and educational and health services for some migrants who returned to their countries of origin. Private sector partnerships, for example, have helped migrants improve their employability with access to computers and the internet.<sup>139</sup>

### ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

For migrants who voluntarily decide to return to their countries of origin, IOM works with government and NGO partners to provide administrative, logistical, and financial assistance. This support is available throughout the return process: as the migrant makes the decision to return, during their return journey, and as they reintegrate back into their home community. Support can include help with travel preparations, healthcare, employment, reconnection with social networks, and psychosocial wellbeing.<sup>140</sup>



## PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

### SUPPORTING MIGRANTS TO SHARE NEW KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS WITH THEIR HOME COMMUNITY:

Migrants can bring back information that supports livelihoods and decision-making. Sharing what they have learned as a result of migration can create positive spillover effects for families and non-migrant households.<sup>141</sup> USAID could facilitate this transfer of knowledge and skills through events like community workshops.

## OVERARCHING OPPORTUNITIES

Migrants also encounter challenges that span multiple phases of their journey. In these instances, USAID and other organizations have the opportunity to develop programming that can meet multiple needs and serve multiple audiences.

## PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

### INFORMATION SHARING THROUGH A DIGITAL MIGRATORY ASSISTANCE NET-WORK:

Migrants, service providers, and aid agencies would all benefit from aggregating the services and programming available to migrants and their families within a broader network. This could be as simple as a digital directory of services that are offered to those on the move in a particular region.<sup>142</sup> Migrants would benefit by being informed of the services available to them and where they can find them. Local organizations would benefit by gaining visibility among both the migrant population and donor organizations. Organizations like USAID would benefit from a better understanding of the service landscape available to migrants: who is doing what, what needs are being met, and where there are gaps.

It is important to note that access to mobile devices may be difficult for some migrants. Programming designed to overcome the digital divide will improve accessibility.

**MOBILE SAFETY NETS THAT PROVIDE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS:** Social services are often tied to where one lives. To promote the protection and wellbeing of migrants in their receiving communities, it is essential to ensure that social services are migrant-inclusive. Programs that allow enrolled users to access health services, food aid, cash transfers, and social security benefits regardless of location can help ease migrants’ transition into urban destinations. USAID could support intra-country portability of social benefits similar to India’s Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY) health program.<sup>143</sup>

**FIGURE 4: PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE MIGRANT JOURNEY**



**Note:** The dashed line illustrates that return may not always be possible or even an intended part of the migrant’s journey.

## RELEVANT POLICIES

Policies are essential for creating enabling environments for more productive migration. Policies on migration, adaptation, and development can strengthen migration outcomes by recognizing the value of migration and directing attention, strategies, and resources toward migrants and sending and receiving communities. Programming that supports migration as a climate adaptation strategy is most viable when supported by local, national, and international policies. Collaboration among actors from different policy areas, including climate change, rural and urban development, and human mobility can increase policy coherence and improve enabling environments for safer, more productive migration. Examples of such policies include the African Union Commission’s Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Bangladesh’s National Strategy on the Management of Disaster and Climate Induced Internal Displacement. In the U.S., several current policies are well-positioned to guide programming relevant to various stages of the migrant’s journey.

### EXAMPLES OF CURRENT U.S. POLICIES

#### U.S. ROOT CAUSES AND COLLABORATIVE MIGRATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In this whole-of-government approach, USAID and other U.S. agencies have been directed to support activities that “manage safe, orderly, and humane migration in North and Central America” while taking steps to address factors driving migration. These strategies are designed to help people build sustainable lives in their countries. Programming that supports safe and effective internal migration is within the strategies’ mandates. The strategies also acknowledge the need to strengthen cooperation with regional partners in expanding safe and legal pathways to the U.S. for those who are unable to live with dignity in their own countries.<sup>144</sup>

#### USAID CLIMATE STRATEGY

The Climate Strategy recognizes migration as an adaptation strategy and discusses supporting safer and more productive migration, including in sending and receiving communities. The Strategy further notes opportunities to support migrants to strengthen tenure and resource rights; leverage remittances and diaspora investing for climate resilience; support social cohesion, peace building, and equitable representation in communities affected by climate-related migration; and support migrants and displaced people by investing in capacity and assets that travel with those on the move.

#### USAID SUSTAINABLE URBAN SERVICES POLICY

Through this policy USAID seeks to improve the delivery of essential services in urban settings. This policy recognizes that cities must be able to absorb growing populations and provide employment opportunities to migrants.<sup>145</sup>

#### USAID C-TIP POLICY

Since 2001, USAID has implemented Counter Trafficking in Persons (C-TIP) programs in 71 countries. C-TIP programs focus on a range of objectives such as training front-line responders to prevent, detect, and prosecute human trafficking; providing shelter and legal aid to victims of trafficking; assisting victims of trafficking through job skills training; working to prevent discrimination against migrants; building local capacity to protect migrants and other vulnerable populations; combating human trafficking in agriculture, construction, fishing, and seafood processing sectors; and strengthening cross-border collaboration to foster mutual accountability of governments to facilitate safe migration.<sup>146</sup>

#### USAID ASSISTANCE TO INTERNALLY DIS-PLACED PERSONS POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Recognizing that people displaced within their own countries are a pressing humanitarian, human rights, development, and political challenge for the global community, USAID provides significant assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and supports a wide range of interventions from providing basic essential needs to resettlement and legal protection. Policy aims include the protection of IDPs during all phases of displacement and information sharing to forge a common understanding of the problems and build consensus on policy and strategic approaches to internal displacement.

## **POLICY OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND NATIONAL POLICY**

**REGIONAL FREE MOVEMENT AGREEMENTS (FMAS) THAT ESTABLISH REGULAR MIGRATION PATHWAYS:** Providing regular migration pathways is a key strategy for ensuring that climate-related migration is safe and orderly. Globally, 120 countries have negotiated FMAs to promote trade. While these agreements are not designed to specifically address climate-related migration, they offer a pathway for countries to facilitate safe and regular cross-border migration. The recent use of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) FMAs during the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season demonstrate that regional frameworks can support climate-related mobility.<sup>147</sup>

FMAs can increase the predictability of regular cross-border movement, helping migrants avoid the unsafe and exploitative conditions of irregular pathways, allowing host government entities to prepare, and supporting migration monitoring efforts. USAID could provide technical assistance to host government entities to help them integrate climate-related migration into FMAs. Further, USAID can encourage government entities to protect migrants with the same rights as regularized residents.

**NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS (NAPS) AND OTHER NATIONAL POLICIES THAT INTEGRATE MIGRATION AS AN ADAPTATION STRATEGY:** Although some countries reference migration in adaptation plans, migration is usually framed as a risk or as maladaptation. There is little attention to the role of migration in adaptation. Of the 34 countries that have submitted NAPs to the UNFCCC, only Ethiopia and Fiji mention migration as an adaptation strategy.<sup>148</sup> Building on experience assisting countries in NAP development through programs such as Climate Change Resilient Development,<sup>149</sup> USAID could support partner countries to integrate migration in their NAPs and other adaptation plans and highlight the potential of migration to advance adaptation and development goals.

### **Migration Programming Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation will be critical for assessing pilot programs, establishing lessons learned and best practices, and evolving migration programming. Considerations for monitoring and evaluation include:

- Outcomes may not be apparent in the short-term as migrants will need time to integrate into receiving communities, find work, and earn money.
- Monitoring how remittances are used and how this income may or may not strengthen household and community resilience and adaptation is key to understanding the role of migration in adaptation.
- Measurements of success should include indicators for migrants, migrant households, sending communities, and receiving communities in order to assess resilience across these populations and locations. There are potential logistical challenges for monitoring and evaluation including tracking people on the move which falls outside many standard methods for evaluation.

## CONCLUSION

Migration has the potential to strengthen the capacity and resilience of individuals, households, and communities. The outcomes of migration, however, depend on how effectively institutions, systems, policies, and programs are able to meet the needs of migrants and sending and receiving communities. This includes the ability to support migrants and communities at key intervention points across the migrant journey.

With established partnerships, a global scope, and relevant expertise across sectors, USAID can play a key role in strengthening safe, orderly, and regular migration to achieve adaptation outcomes. A comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach to climate-related migration across USAID could serve to elevate consideration of migration and improve migration outcomes for adaptation. To enhance the benefits and reduce the risks of migration, context-specific programs that recognize the heterogeneity of migration patterns across different locations and populations are key. Given that some approaches are new, program and policy interventions can initially be piloted and robustly monitored. Programs can also be flexibly designed such that they can be readily adapted over time.

Migration as an adaptation strategy can strengthen country and regional stability, support economic diversification, and facilitate safer and more productive migration with dignity. The programming opportunities presented in this report are designed to increase the benefits and reduce the risks throughout the migration journey for migrants and sending and receiving communities. By supporting the role of migration in climate adaptation, USAID can help countries minimize climate-related humanitarian crises and help people diversify their livelihoods and exercise their agency to move out of harm's way before it is an emergency.



## ANNEX I: KEY TERMS<sup>150</sup>

**CLIMATE-RELATED MIGRATION:** The movement of people related to sudden- or slow-onset/progressive changes in the environment related to climate change impacts (e.g., shifts in water availability, crop productivity, or livability). This includes people who are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, within a State or across an international border.<sup>151</sup>

**DIASPORA:** Migrants, or descendants of migrants, whose identity and sense of belonging have been shaped by their migration experience and background. While the term was originally used to describe the forced displacement of certain peoples, ‘diaspora’ is now generally used to describe those who identify with a homeland, but live outside of it. Diasporas include not only first-generation emigrants, but also foreign born children of these individuals, as long as they maintain some link to their parent’s home country.<sup>152</sup>

**FORCED DISPLACEMENT:** Forced movement or removal of persons or persons obliged to leave their places of habitual residence as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters.

**IMMOBILITY:** Inability to move from a place of risk due to a lack of capital (social, economic, political, and/or financial); or not moving away from a place of risk due to personal choice (adapted from Rigaud et al. 2018<sup>153</sup> and Foresight 2011).<sup>154</sup>

**INTERNAL MIGRATION:** The movement of people within a State involving the establishment of a new temporary or permanent residence.

**INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON (IDP):** Refers to someone who has been forced to leave his/her home or place of habitual residence, usually due to armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who has not crossed an internationally-recognized State border. There are UN Guiding Principles and an African regional convention on IDPs, but no international convention.

**IRREGULAR MIGRATION:** Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of a country, such as with-out the necessary authorization or documents required under immigration regulations for entry, stay, or work in a country. “Irregular” rather than “illegal” migrant is the preferred term in the international community, given that an individual cannot be intrinsically illegal, only acts of an individual can be illegal. In addition, irregular migrants may be potential refugees, and the Refugee Convention generally prohibits imposition of penalties on refugees for illegal entry or stay in a country when they are fleeing threats to their life or freedom.

**LABOR MIGRATION:** Movement of persons from one country to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment. In line with the definition of migrant, labor migration is de-fined as covering both migrants moving within the country and across international borders. Labor migration takes many forms and can be distinguished by multiple categories, e.g. forced vs. voluntary, skilled vs. unskilled, legal vs. illegal, temporary vs. full emigration, meeting an economic need vs. creating one, etc.

**MIGRANT:** Any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.

**MOBILITY/MOVEMENT:** Movement of people, including temporary or long-term, short- or long-distance, internal or international, voluntary or forced, and seasonal or permanent, as well as planned relocation.<sup>155</sup>

**PROACTIVE MIGRATION:** Migration that involves an anticipatory risk assessment and a decision to migrate. This is in contrast to reactive or survival migration which is a response after the occurrence of an environmental shock.<sup>156</sup>

**RECEIVING COMMUNITIES:** The communities the migrants move to. Also referred to as “destination communities.”

**REFUGEE:** Under the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, an individual who is unwilling to return to his or her country of origin due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. There are several exceptions,

including on criminal or national security grounds. Merely fleeing armed conflict, crime or generalized violence is not sufficient under the Convention, although some countries in Latin America and Africa apply a broader definition based on regional instruments.

**REMITTANCES:** Personal monetary transfers made by migrants to individuals or communities with whom the migrant has links.

**SENDING COMMUNITIES:** The communities that migrants originate from.



## PHOTO CREDITS

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## ENDNOTES

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