

MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC SECURITY: LESSONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS



Monica Juma
Africa Institute of South Africa



OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- Status of migration in Africa today
- Theorizing migration and economic development
- Lessons learnt and Opportunities for business
- Conclusions

1. STATUS OF MIGRATION IN AFRICA TODAY

Overall population movements are attaining increased significance in the context of current global social transformation.

- Volume and importance of Migration is growing
- There are numerous efforts at implementing differentiated policies for various categories of migrants
- Intense global competition to attract highly skilled migrants, but not refugees, unskilled migrants, and other categories of forcibly displaced persons.

Intro....

- Growing acceptance that migration is integral to processes of globalization and regional integration.
- Of critical concern is the feminization of migration without adequate targeted protection and assistance for women and girls.
- Transformation engendered by new security threats—real and perceived—such as international terrorism have politicised migration,

Combined these factors generate lessons and determine the value of migration and potential contribution to development opportunities.

2. TRENDS IN MIGRATION IN AFRICA (4 main)

1. Contradictory trends in population movement: decline in refugees/asylum seekers but increase in other migrants-IDPs, voluntary migrants; feminisation of migration; protracted refugee situations etc.
2. Shrinking protection and opportunities (inc. Hostile policies)
3. Securitisation of displacement and migration (refugee Terrorist)
4. The erosion of the African humanitarian capacity and take-over of the humanitarian space

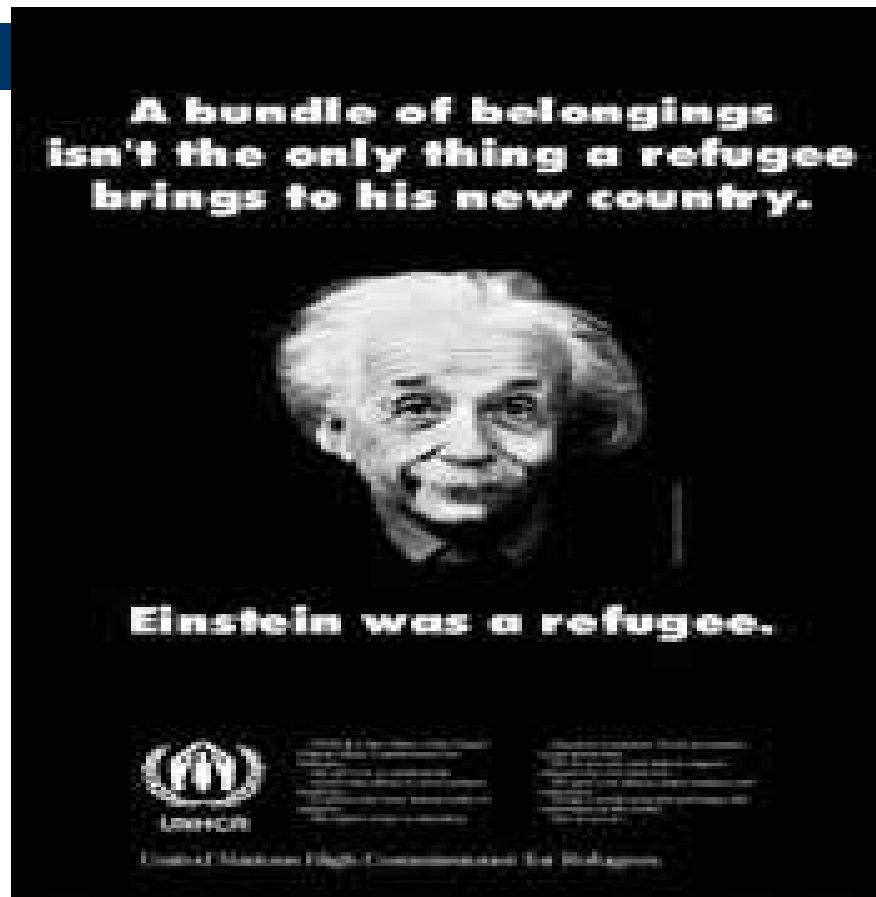
2. THEORISING MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- Research on migration is framed in a false theoretical bifurcation of forced versus voluntary.
- FM is framed in rights based conceptual/theoretical assumptions
- VM is framed within economic frameworks e.g. rational choice theories; push-pull theories and cost-benefit analysis.
- However, a general survey of the literature on demographic mobility reveals numerous economic, sociological and demographic factors explain the initiation of both internal and international migration – degrees of variability



3. LESSONS LEARNT

LESSON 1: MIGRANT RESOURCEFULNESS



LESSON 2: PEOPLE MOVE INTO THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 2. Preference in migration is within the region – in the neighbourhood (cheaper; better prospects for adaptation; easier to return etc.)
 - a) large networks of informal trade and opportunities – communication, credit etc.
 - b) limited variation for products in business terms – opportunity to grow business.
 - b) Focus on regional markets

LESSON 3: CONTROL REGIMES DONT WORK!

3. Government efforts to control migration:

- may if successful (although seldom) reduce the migrant stock but do not improve their lives or security; contribute to tensions.
- National interests are better served by approaches that manage rather than control movements e.g the regularisation of Zimbabweans.
- Controls increase business costs – in terms of corruption, delays etc.

LESSON 4: MIGRANTS ARE A RESOURCE

4. There is growing recognition of migrants as assets for governments/region – diaspora.
 - More govts encourage return of skilled migrants through subsidies, provision of information, cultural exchanges, allowance of dual citizenship and maintenance of contacts through internet etc. However subsidy programmes are not fully explored and their impact remains unclear.
 - Opportunities for technology and skills transfer etc. Increasing competitiveness across the world.

LESSON 5: POLICIES DRIVEN BY MISCONCEPTION

Lesson 5: Policies on migration are based on misconceptions - driven largely by fear and lack of information: e.g perceived high rates of emigration of skilled Africans. (An OECD study indicates:

- Africa is not an important source of immigrants to OECD countries,. In 2000,
- only 8.8 per cent of foreign-born highly educated people in OECD countries were African;
- only 9.6 per cent of the foreign born with low education levels were African.
- Among these, 49 per cent of the highly educated African emigrants came from the middle-income countries of North and southern Africa;
- 68 per cent of the poorly educated African emigrants came from those countries.

Cont...

By contrast,

- 50 per cent of the foreigners in OECD countries were born in other OECD countries. Thus, neither Africa in general, nor low-income countries within Africa particularly, are well represented among immigrants in the OECD.

C) Notions that “no exit” option for migrants is good for economy is not correct.

Recent simulations indicate the following:

CONT...

- that small increments in global migration movements could have far more profound effects in enhancing world production than could complete removal of all policy barriers to trade.
- Remittances have become a critical form of financing the balance of payments: they now exceed official dev. assistance and total remittances cap direct foreign investment flows in most regions in Africa.
- Fallacy of brain drain- there are larger volumes of goods, services and monies on the move
- Professionals in most cases maintain productive links with their homes/regions

LESSON 6: FEMINISATION OF MIGRATION

6. feminisation of migration is on the increase and comes with

- inadequate legislation,
- poor enforcement,
- social attitudes and
- legality of prostitution make abuse of these populations rampant – especially in the form of human trafficking.

CONCLUSION

1. On the balance, and as part of the reality of globalisation, migration offers more opportunities for economic growth than constraints – the challenge is undertaking research that offers a knowledge base for alternative policy options: some grey areas
 - a) Migration (scope and scale) within Africa
 - b) Adaptation of good practices within the continent – Tanzania, Kenya, Senegal etc.
 - c) Incentives and approaches for leveraging migrants resourcefulness – tax regimes; voting etc.;



Thank you for listening
Questions/comments

mjuma@ai.org.za