

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1



# MiWORC LABOUR MIGRATION NEWSLETTER

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Coordinated by the African Centre for Migration &  
Society, University of the Witwatersrand.*

*NOVEMBER 2012*

Dear Stakeholders,

Welcome to the inaugural MiWORC Labour Migration Newsletter. The newsletter is a product of our Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) on [Regional International Migration and its Impact on the South African Labour Market: Data, policies and livelihoods](#).

We are looking forward to your feedback, suggestions and ideas for partnerships, in particular in terms of dissemination of research findings.

Warm regards,

The Editorial Team



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## **Partnership and Organisational Structure**

The Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) is co-funded by the European Union EU-South Africa Dialogue Facility EuropeAid/132200/L/ACT/ZA and the following partners: The African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) of Wits University is the main beneficiary and coordinator of the consortium and has partnered with the UNESCO Chair on Regional integration, Migration and Free movement Programme (United Nations University- University of Pretoria) and the United Nations University - Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) based in Brugges (Belgium). The associate partners include the South African Department of Labour (DoL), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

We would also like to welcome and thank the Research Programme Consortium, Migrating Out of Poverty (RPC-MOoP) coordinated by the University of Sussex and funded by the Department For International Development (DFID) (<http://migratingoutofpoverty.dfid.gov.uk>) who have committed to funding aspects of Work Packages 2 (Improving the quality of statistical data on foreign labour in South Africa) and 3 (Qualitative studies of regional low and high-skilled migration to South Africa) as part of its Global Work Package for 2012-2013.

This partnership, expressed in a research consortium, is driven by the main objective to strengthen the policy dialogue and various pillars of the Strategic Partnership of the EU-SA Dialogue Facility to improve sectoral policy dialogue and co-operation between the European Union and South Africa. It also seeks to use the research findings to build awareness on labour migration in South Africa and strengthen the capacity of the various stakeholders.

We have embarked on building a partnership intended to produce original data on four key aspects of current labour migration to South Africa:

1. The state of labour, migration and economic development policies between South Africa and its SADC partners.
2. The improvement of existing labour market statistical data to better reflect migrant workers' position.

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3. Sectoral case studies of the construction, mining, commercial agriculture and hospitality sectors for low-skilled migrants and of engineering /construction and public health sectors for the highly-skilled.
4. Migrant workers and social rights access and portability in South Africa and the region.

## Research Update

Our research is organized in work packages (WP), addressing the project's main themes and key questions. We would love to hear from you and will be glad to respond to your questions and comments.

### WP1: Policy review

An appraisal on the existing policies on labour, migration, and economic development in Southern Africa is necessary to best respond to questions relating to labour migration. Questions arising include: Which interests and objectives drive the policy formulations in South Africa and the region? Are there best practices that can be drawn from the European Union (EU) and other regional integration organisations and replicated within this context? If so, are these best practices taken into account in the policy formulation processes? What regional actors are involved in the policymaking, and how?

The policy review shall inform the background research undertaken in the WP 2, 3 and 4.

Lorenzo Fioramonti, an associate professor at the Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation at the University of Pretoria will lead the research on policy review.

Sonja Nita a researcher at the United Nations University CRIS Brugges will work on the comparative analyses of migration policies. Lorenzo and Sonja will be assisted by a post-doctoral researcher, Chris Nshimbi.

So far a review on the South African policies and a draft chapter has been sent out for comments. Interviews with key stakeholders are currently taking place.



## *WP2: Improving the quality of statistical data on foreign labour in South Africa*

This work package stems from the realisation that there is limited and inadequate knowledge on foreign labour in South Africa. While various statistical instruments provide rich evidence and maps out significant trends in labour market dynamics across provinces, most omit any description of migrants' participation. Some of the critical information needed for evidence-based policy formulation includes:

- Foreign / domestic workers' participation rates;
- Mismatch of skills / training;
- Gender bias;
- Sector specialisation;
- Proportion of migrants in various industries;
- Entry conditions for migrants in the labour force, retention, remuneration and access to the labour market.

This research seeks to improve the quality of statistical data on foreign labour in South Africa by critically reviewing all existing data sets and their methodologies, in light of international good practice. A new survey instrument, capitalising on already existing initiatives, will be developed and piloted, in order to issue key recommendations to South African government agencies and foster renewed collaborations with stakeholders.

The scope and anticipated impact of this research beckons the involvement of all key stakeholders. Following advice from the steering committee of the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement (TDCA), the WP coordinator, Dr Aurelia Segatti consulted with key stakeholders to form an Advisory Committee. This committee will provide technical expertise and experienced guidance on the needs, feasibility and standards relating to the improvement of the quality and quantity of data available of foreign labour in South Africa.

The members of the committee are:

- Dr Aurelia Segatti, Senior Researcher, ACMS: Coordination of Work Package 2 and chairing of AC
- Tesfalem Araia (MA), Researcher, ACMS (coordination of survey activities);
- Tendani Ramulongo, Head of Research, Department of Labour (DoL);
- Lephina Mayekiso, Deputy Director: Research, Department of Labour (DoL);
- Thami Bikitsha, Deputy Director: Research, Department of Labour (DoL);
- Seana Nkhahle, Director, Research and Strategic Development, South African Local Government Association (SALGA);

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- Nomusa Ngwenya, Researcher, Research and Strategic Development, South African Local Government Association (SALGA);
- Tshepo Mabela, Chief Survey Statistician, Household Labour Market Division, Statistics South Africa (StatSA);
- Dr Susanna Ubomba-Jaswa, Manager, Health and Vital Statistics Division, Statistics South Africa (StatsSA);
- Coffi Agossou, LMIS Specialist, Pretoria Office (Southern and Eastern Africa), International Labour Organisation (ILO);
- Vic van Vuuren, Director, Pretoria Office (Southern and Eastern Africa), International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The Advisory Committee met in July and validated the Terms of Reference for a labour market specialist/statistician. An advertisement was sent out and applications received. We look forward to announcing the successful applicant in our next newsletter. As part of the Advisory Team, we would also like to thank the ILO for committing technical expertise and financial support for this research.

We anticipate rich information and guidance from this committee. Coupled with the partners' involvement in this research project, we are hopeful that the final research findings, reports and communication products will substantively improve the quality of statistical data on foreign labour in South Africa available to scholars, policy-makers, and various stakeholders in business, organised labour and beyond. This information will be available in the public domain.

### *WP3: Qualitative studies of regional low and high-skilled migration to South Africa*

There is limited information on the presence and impact of low and high skilled migrant labour in the South African labour market. Apart from the mining industry, information on the representation of non-nationals in other industries like hospitality, construction and commercial farming is absent. This research is structured into two components:

1. The SA economy and its structural dependency on low-skilled foreign labour: Low skilled migration flows, current policy frameworks and actual practices
2. Skilled migration and South African economic development: sectoral knowledge, policy options and administrative management.

This work package seeks to:

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- Explore existing legislation and policies relating to the procurement, retention and regulation of low skilled migrant labour in South Africa;
- Provide an analysis of the relationship between the transformation of the South African economy and its structural need for low-skilled migrant labour;
- Document actual practices related to the management of migrant labour on the ground through examination of the role of labour inspectors and unions;
- Determine what sectors employ low-skilled migrants and to what extent they are dependent on foreign labour.

Highly skilled labour poses similar policy and process questions; foreign workers have found their way into the South African public and private sectors. Policy measures to address the skills gaps have not been clearly articulated in relation with skills import.

Is the recruitment of highly skilled migrants informed by labour market needs or is it governed by other driving forces? What are the key assumptions dominating employers' selection criteria? Are claims regarding the negative effects of recruiting highly skilled foreigners on local wages and particularly the employment of young black graduates valid? What sort of skills transfer have taking place and through which mechanisms?

This research aims to answer these questions through a content analysis of the existing policy documents and through sector case studies. Desktop research of the content analysis has started. Zaheera Jinnah is the research coordinator of this work package and is working with Tesfalem Araia and Aurelia Segatti on drafting concept notes for the case studies. This research is also enriched by 2 post graduate students with an interest and experience in labour. One [opinion piece](#) reviewing contradictions in positions currently held by government, business and organised labour on labour migration was published in *Business Day* in June.

## WP4: Migrants' social rights portability

The final WP explores social benefits accrued to migrant labourers. Migrants within Southern Africa are moving between countries where social protection systems are minimal, or non-existent, and the question of non-citizen access to social protection remains debatable. Within a context of increased labour migration and regional integration, could portable social benefits for migrants provide better mechanisms for social protection? Although public social systems in Southern Africa are limited in their scope with budgetary deficits and service provision compromised by lack of planning, South Africa's legal framework provides for extensive social protection (under the Refugee Act). Until recently, social benefits were largely restricted to South African citizens and residents, recent changes have extended these services to refugees through

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social grants. Some bilateral agreements also provide this protection in limited scope but too little is known regarding their implementation.

WP 4 focuses on key research questions on social protection and migrant labour in relation to:

- Mobility and social protection beyond citizen-based approach and migrants' agency in devising informal protection networks;
- The call for State as enforcer for social of migrants given the documented harassment and discrimination of migrants;
- The role played by private sector through corporate social responsibility in relation to rights portability between South Africa and its main labour suppliers;
- Role played by SADC in fostering social protection arrangements in labour exporting countries within the region.

Prof. Bob Deacon, the coordinator of WP4, is currently finalizing a book on the Social Protection Floor. Reason Beremauro a post-doctoral researcher will assist Deacon. Deacon has established regional and international linkages at the South African Development Community (SADC) African Union and United Nations (UN) level exploring partnership possibilities and monitoring recent developments in link with mentioned research areas. A concept note for the work package is currently being drafted.

## *Dissemination and Capacity Building Activities*

The development drive of this research outputs calls for involvement of all key stakeholders from its inception. As part of our commitment, we seek to work closely with all stakeholders by providing information and evidence that shall be used for advocacy by the various partners, as well as strengthening capacity among all partners.

## *Dissemination*

To this end, the research findings and reports shall be translated into communication material targeting various stakeholders through briefs and facts sheets. We shall be hosting events to disseminate our findings as well as workshops to discuss the implications of these findings on policy processes and stakeholder advocacy activities.

We are currently undertaking a stakeholder mapping of the various institutions working on migration and labour market dynamics at both national and regional level. Please do share this newsletter with those you consider to have interest in these topics. You can also send us an email with the specific names of the organizations.

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The stakeholder mapping shall inform the communication strategies and activities we plan. This external newsletter will be sent out every month to provide regular updates of all activity clusters and flag past and coming events. To read more on this project and its various work packages, please visit the [MiWORC page](#) on the ACMS website.

## Capacity building

The depth of richness flowing from the involvement of partners and advisors from diverse fields offers great opportunity for skills transfer through on-going research. A key aspect of our capacity-building strategy involves strengthening the capacity of our associates (DoL and SALGA will be key beneficiaries of these opportunities). We appeal to all stakeholders to take note of all opportunities that may arise in the course of this research. You can reach us for various collaborations and opportunities for dissemination.

## Events

- Zaheera Jinnah & Aurelia Segatti attended the NALEDI Southern African Migration Project launch workshop, NALEDI, Johannesburg, **4-5 October 2012**.
- Zaheera Jinnah & Aurelia Segatti met with ILO migration specialists to discuss the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) and involvement partnership with the specialist team, **28 September 2012**.
- SALGA: Meeting with the Department of Home Affairs to discuss partnership in the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC), **25 September 2012**.
- Aurelia Segatti presented to the Department of Labour, Labour market Division at the Preparatory meeting for DoL migration workshop, **24 July 2012**
- Aurelia Segatti presented to Statistics South Africa, National Statistics System, Labour Market & Population & Health Divisions on the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC): Pretoria, **17 July 2012**.
- Aurelia Segatti presented to the Department of Home Affairs, Policy Development Division, **11 July 2012**.
- Aurelia Segatti presented on the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) to Krister van Rensburg, Deputy General Secretary, Federation of Trade Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA);, Roodepoort, **27 June 2012**.
- Zaheera Jinnah and Aurelia Segatti presented on the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) to Rudi Dicks, Executive Research Director, National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI) in Johannesburg, **25 June 2012**.

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- Zaheera Jinnah & Aurelia Segatti presented on the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) to the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement-Steering Committee, DIRCO in Pretoria, **13 June 2012**.
- Jo Vearey and Aurelia Segatti presented a paper, "Building regional migration governance in Southern Africa, A case study of the South African public health response", at the Regional governance of migration and social policy conference, convened by the UNESCO-UNU Chair in Regional Integration, Migration and Free Movement of People, University of Pretoria, **19-20 April 2012**.
- ACMS team presented on the Migrating for Work Research Consortium (MiWORC) to the Labour Market Division of the Department of Labour in Pretoria, **11 April 2012**.

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