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Aspects of migrant integration

Measurement of socio-economic conditions of migrants: progress, challenges and lessons learned

Progress report on work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Task Force on Measurement of the socio-economic conditions of migrants

Note by Task Force on measurement of the socio-economic conditions of migrants

Summary

Growing international migration prompts the need for robust statistical information to better understand this phenomenon, the migrants and the impact of international migration on sending and receiving countries.

There are generally two aspects to understanding migrants: the measurement of the stocks and flows of migrant groups and the measurement of their socio-economic characteristics. This Task Force aims to address the latter component by undertaking methodological work on the measurement of the socio-economic conditions of migrants, in particular, measurement of the conditions that would permit longitudinal analysis of migrant groups.

I. Task Force objectives

1. By means of methodological work, the Task Force (TF) set up two main objectives and some specific sub-objectives:
 - (a) Measurement on the different dimensions of the socio-economic conditions of migrants;
 - (i) Identify the dimensions that are most relevant to the understanding of migrant situations, especially the longitudinal aspect of socio-economic conditions;
 - (ii) Identify and develop indicators for each of the dimensions;
 - (b) Improvement of the availability, quality and comparability of data in migrant socio-economic conditions;
 - (i) Outline the types of data needed to produce the proposed indicators;
 - (ii) Review existing sources for their suitability to develop indicators;
 - (iii) Provide guidelines and sharing of experiences in the production of the indicators using existing census, surveys and administrative data sources.

II. Other relevant initiatives

2. The Task Force has drawn on an extensive body of research to help understand the socio-economic conditions of migrants. In particular, joint work by Eurostat and the UNECE on the mainstreaming of migration statistics should provide migrant identifiers in existing data sources and would potentially provide information on a wide range of social and economic statistics.
3. Other relevant research was conducted by Eurostat, in their *Zaragoza Pilot Study*. The study identified existing indicators on migrant integration that were harmonized across European states. The TF examined these proposed indicators, and in many cases adopted them, for the development of each of the dimensions of the Task Force. The TF will also evaluate the data sources that the *Zaragoza Pilot Study* used for the indicators that the TF would propose.
4. The *Suitland Working Group*, convened by the U.S. Census Bureau, UNECE and the World Bank, has embarked on similar work to that of the Task Force. Some of the planned activities of the Suitland Group include conducting a methodological literature review on the study of migration, building a website repository of household survey questionnaires that could be used to study migration and linking administrative data files with survey data. The TF monitors closely the work done by the Suitland initiative and reviews the work for the TF purposes.
5. While the work of each of the above parties provides an important perspective on the study of migration, seldom do existing indicators adopt a longitudinal perspective. The “snapshot” approach, using cross-sectional data, yields important insights on the conditions of migrants; it does not, however, allow for the study of how and the process through which migrants settled in their new home. This is an area that the TF plans to contribute.
6. An obvious reason for the lack of longitudinal approach to understand migrant population stems from the lack of appropriate data source. The TF plans to review existing longitudinal data, share the experience on longitudinal data taking, look at alternate

methods to develop longitudinal data, as well as put forward indicators that are fit for longitudinal analysis.

III. Task Force membership

7. Led by Canada, the Task Force has involved 12 other countries (Australia, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States, and Palestine as observer) and 4 international organizations (OECD, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, EUROSTAT and UNECE).

IV. Presentation of the work accomplished (April 2011 to July 2012)

A. Socio-economic conditions

8. There are many areas of interest that can be included as socio-economic conditions of migrants. In order to identify the conditions that are most relevant to understanding migrant groups and to keep the project within manageable scope, some evaluation criteria for inclusion were set out. Based on these criteria, the TF identified six socio-economic dimensions. They are: demography, education, labour market, economic well-being, social and health. Key issues or research questions that warrant statistical information in each of the dimensions are then identified.

B. Demography

9. The demographic characteristics are basic attributes of a given migrant group and important determinants of socio-economic conditions. Demographic characteristics could also help to narrow down the analysis on specific migrant sub-groups, such as immigrant youths, working age immigrants, or seniors.

C. Education

10. Monitoring the educational characteristics is of interest to many countries because the information brings light to the human capital of migrants. It is also an indication on the mechanism to equip the target populations to the labour market.

D. Labour market

11. It is fair to say that migrant labour market conditions are at the forefront of policy debates. Since most people migrate when they are in working ages, they are expected to participate in the labour force. The extent and quality of their labour market conditions affect whether the migrants are contributing to, or drawing resources from, their country of residence.

E. Economic well-being

12. Economic well-being of migrants is often considered as the outcomes of labour market participation. Employment and economic well-being are the two areas that occupy the focus of policy debates.

F. Social characteristics

13. Even though most of the existing international work focuses on the labour market condition or economic aspects of migrant population, the extent to which migrants participate in social and civic activities is considered a key element in the settlement continuum and discourse for social cohesion.

G. Health

14. The TF also recognizes the importance of health indicators for migrant populations. Some of the debates over health conditions of migrants include mental health, access and literacy, group-specific illness as well as general well-being.

1. A framework to organize the socio-economic characteristics of migrants

15. In an attempt to systematically address the research questions associated with each of the aforementioned dimensions, the TF used a general framework with three components for each dimension: (1) Access and participation, (2) Environment and quality, and (3) Outcomes.

16. Access and participation seek basic information on a given dimension, e.g., cross-sectional labour market participation or employment rate for a specific reference period, longitudinal indicator on the process of accessing the labour market, etc. Environment and quality focus on indicators to inform the details of the situation or the context which would provide further insight of the given situation, e.g., cross-sectional employment situation in terms of part-time or full-time, quality of employment or longitudinal indicator to show migrants changing employment situation from part-time to full-time. Outcomes refer to the impact of the situation, for example, the impact of international credential accreditation on employment.

V. Migrant groups

17. The scope of the migrant population is as complex as the socio-economic characteristics. There are many types of migrants. This is evident from previous international work to measure migrants and those known as hard-to-count migrant groups (e.g. Task Force on the analysis of international migration estimates using different length of stay, Task Force on Improving Migration and Migrant Data Using Household Surveys and Other Sources (also known as Suitland Working Group), 2008 UNECE questionnaire on international migration statistics).

18. Furthermore, certain socio-economic characteristics are group-specific. For example, language acquisition or credential recognition is relevant to migrants, but may not be relevant to the second generation individuals. In order to limit the scope of the project, the socio-economic indicators of two major migrant groups – foreign-born and second generation individuals – would be explored.

A. Foreign-born

19. Foreign born is defined as persons born outside the country where they currently reside, regardless of their citizenship¹. Persons born in the country are defined as native. Other characteristics such as their characteristics at arrival, their time of arrival in the country, their reason of migration and their immigrant status could be used to refine the definition of this migrant group.

B. Second generation

20. Second generation refers to those who are the descendants of foreign-born. In other words, the person is born in the country of residence, but one or both of his/her parents are born outside the country of residence.

VI. Why longitudinal analysis?

21. Studying migrant characteristics in a receiving country from a longitudinal perspective is particularly fitting. Existing discourse on migrant settlement and integration often adopt a continuum model, i.e., migrants become more established and integrated as length of stay in the receiving country increases.

22. Longitudinal data provide information to track *how* migrants settle, both socially and economically, in the new communities, not simply *if* they do. Such information is invaluable to researchers and policy-makers when creating settlement programs or identifying critical stages of migrant settlement to their new home.

23. Another important facet of the longitudinal perspective is that it allows for better identification of causal relations. This helps to determine *why* various actions may have been taken or *why* certain outcomes were reached. Using only cross-sectional data, cause can only be understood by asking retrospective questions. For example, in order to determine why migrants settled in a particular area, longitudinal data could be used to answer the question by noting the change in other variables over time. To obtain an answer using cross-sectional data, on the other hand, a question such as “why did you move?” would need to be asked.

VII. Socio-economic characteristics of foreign-born and second generation migrants

24. Of the six dimensions, the TF has started the work on three. Using the framework as general guidelines, research questions, areas of interest and existing work on these areas were identified.

¹ Recommendations on Statistics of International Migrations, Revision 1, United Nations publication, Sales.No. E.98.XVII.14.

<i>Socio-economic conditions of foreign-born</i>			
<i>Demography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic characteristics of foreign-born compared with reference group: age, gender, marital status, mixed marriages, fertility, family, household composition, residential mobility, access to housing, and home ownership • Other characteristics: language acquisition, admission/visa category and reasons for migration • What obstacles/difficulties do migrants encounter if desiring similar demographic characteristics of host country nationals? 		
	<i>Access & Participation</i>	<i>Environment & Quality</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
<i>Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If migrants have access to post-migration education or training? <i>(Type of training: job-related, language, formal education; full-time vs part time attendance; time to access training; post-migration education attainment trajectory)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What obstacles, difficulties do migrants encounter with their education? <i>(process of credential recognition; availability/cost/time spent on additional training)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the educational outcomes before and after migration? <i>(Educational attainment; field of study; place of education)</i> • Dynamic & process of transition into the host economy? <i>(Skills and job match)</i>
<i>Social</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there distinct patterns of social engagement among migrants? • Do they volunteer? <i>(Level of volunteering; type of groups volunteering; formal vs informal volunteering)</i> • How active are migrants involved in the political and civic process? • Who uses and access services and do these patterns change over time? • General trust • Experience of discrimination • Experience or level of victimisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are migrants able to access support in times of need? <i>(With whom migrants access help; frequency of contacting friends)</i> • What are the perceived barriers to participation in society, civic engagement and social networks? • Element of trust (government/authority, friends, neighbour, etc) • Types & places of discrimination • Types of victimisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the sense of affiliation with the host country? <i>(Sense of belonging; acquisition of citizenship and voting participation)</i> • Do volunteer opportunities successfully lead to paid employment?
<i>Socio-economic conditions of second generation of migrants</i>			
<i>Demography</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic characteristics of foreign-born compared with reference group: age, gender, marital status, mixed marriages, fertility, family, household composition, residential mobility, access to housing, and home ownership • What obstacles/difficulties do migrants encounter if desiring similar demographic characteristics of host country nationals? 		
	<i>Access & Participation</i>	<i>Environment & Quality</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
<i>Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who gains access to education? <i>(School attendance; school enrolment; drop-out rate)</i> • How well do they move through the education system? <i>(Early school leavers; length of study; trajectory of moving in and out of school)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the conditions of migrants' learning environment? <i>(Student-teacher ratio; dissimilarity index; composition of student population in school)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do they perform in the education system? <i>(Level of literacy – reading, mathematics and science; Educational attainment)</i> • What is their intergenerational educational mobility? • How well do they make the transition from school to work?
<i>Social</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is their level of 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do they engage

	participation in social and civic groups different? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who volunteers? (<i>Level of volunteering; type of groups volunteering; formal vs informal volunteering</i>) Do they experience discrimination? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types, location of discrimination 	with the political process? (<i>Voting participation, share of migrants among elected representatives, sense of belonging</i>)
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VIII. Data availability and quality

25. The TF has started to prepare metadata to identify different data sources that collect information on socio-economic conditions of migrants – particularly education characteristics. These include censuses, labour force surveys or other household surveys, or administrative databases.

26. Here is an example of different data sources where we could identify the foreign-born population (defined by place of birth) and some education indicators.

Indicators	Data availability						
	Australia	Canada	Italy	Ireland	Spain	Turkey	United States
<i>If migrants have access to post-migration education or training?</i>							
School attendance or school enrolment	Census	Survey (NHS and LFS), Longitudinal survey (LISA)	Census, Survey (SCIF)	Census	Census, Survey (NIS, LFS)	Survey (LFS)	Census (ACS), Survey (CPS)
Education drop-out			Survey (SCIF)	Census			Survey (CPS)
Type of school	Census	Longitudinal survey (LISA)					Census (ACS), Survey (CPS)
Full-time versus part time student status	Census	Survey (LFS)					
Post-migration education attainment trajectory		Longitudinal survey (LISA)					
<i>What obstacles, difficulties do migrants encounter with their education?</i>							
Process of credential recognition							
Length of time in		Longitudinal survey (LISA)					

training							
<i>What are the educational outcomes before and after migration?</i>							
Educational attainment	Census, Survey (CRM-LFS: pre and post migration information)	Survey (NHS, LFS), Longitudinal survey (LISA), Administrative database (IMDB)	Census, Survey (SCIF, LFS)	Census, Survey (LFS)	Census, Survey (NIS, LFS, MS, LCS)	Census, Survey (LFS)	Census (ACS), Survey (CPS)
Field of study	Census, Survey (CRM-LFS), Longitudinal survey (CSAM)	Survey (NHS)	Census, Survey (LFS)	Survey (LFS)	Census, Survey (LFS, MS)	Survey (LFS)	
Place of highest education	Longitudinal survey (CSAM)	Survey (NHS, LFS), Longitudinal survey (LISA)	Census, Survey (SCIF)	Census	Survey (NIS, LFS, MS)		
<i>Dynamic and process of transition into the host economy?</i>							
Skill and job match (over-qualification)		Survey (NHS, LFS), Longitudinal survey (LISA)			Survey (LFS, LCS)		Census (ACS), Survey (CPS)

27. There are some challenges, however, with existing data sources:

(a) Availability of longitudinal data: Longitudinal data, especially surveys, are costly to develop. Furthermore, migrants are often mobile and could be transient in the receiving country. As such, it could be challenging to follow these individuals in a longitudinal study;

(b) Limitations to the size and distribution of the immigrant/second generation population: Existing surveys that do not have a migrant-focus often suffer from small sample size of migrant population, under-coverage of recently arrived migrants or exclusion of some migrant groups;

(c) Limited information on details to further distinguish migrant groups: existing surveys also do not necessary have various measures on different migrant groups, such as information on citizenship, country of birth, country of birth of parents or other ethno-cultural characteristics.

28. Given these challenges, the TF will share best practices to evaluate alternative ways of longitudinal data development via linkage.

IX. Next steps: planned activities and outputs (July 2012 to July 2013)

A. Data needs

Fall 2012: Replicate our education framework to the other socio-economic dimensions (demography, social, economic, labour market, health)

B. Data availability/quality

Fall 2012: Review existing sources (censuses, household survey, population registry, administrative database) and their suitability to provide relevant data

Winter 2013: Share practices and write guidelines to countries intending to produce statistics on socio-economic conditions of migrants using existing data sources.
