

Learning by Doing: Circular Migration Among Health Professionals



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What is circular migration?



- Return and Repetition (usually)
- Migrants continuously engaged in CoOrigin and CoDestination
- Involves both temporary and permanent migrants including members of the diaspora
- Explicitly addresses developmental concerns

“...continuing, long-term and fluid movement of people among countries that occupy...a single economic space.”

The Attraction of Circular Migration



- Aiming for a triple-win ?
 - Steady supply of needed workers
 - Inflow of remittances and transfer of skills
 - More opportunities for safer legal, migration from the developing world
- The long road between promise and practice

Keeping Migration Circular



The Usual Route

1. Return of Talent Model (Permanent Migrants)

- Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) Ghana Health Project (January 2005-June 2007)

The Road Less Travelled

2. Institutional Twinning Model (Temporary Migrants)

- AIDS International Training and Research Program (AITRP), National Institute of Health, US (1998 to present)

What seems to work



- **Thinking outside the box**
 - Balance of incentives and enforcement
 - Self-enforcing
- **Infusing flexibility into the system**
 - Monitoring , evaluation and frequent adjustment is crucial
 - Introducing pilot projects is the way to go
- **Putting issues of sustainability at front and center**
 - Relevant skill upgrading is key
 - Ownership at both ends is critical
 - The more inclusive (especially the private sector), the better

Banking on Spontaneous Circularity



- **Administrative complexity, cost, scale, speed**
 - Government role should not be overplayed
 - Role of private sector and other actors
- **“Spontaneous circularity”**
- **Effective actions are likely to be enabling rather than directive**
 - Flexible residency rights: Easier travel , entry and retention of legal status
 - Portable insurance and benefits
 - Dual Citizenship

Conclusion



- Migration is a symptom and not the primary cause
- Migration should be part of the solution
- Creating an enabling framework is a vital first step
- Learning by doing is the only meaningful route

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