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Presentation for the Expert Roundtable on the Social Aspects of Migration and Development

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The Social Aspects of Migration and Development

Focusing on the social aspects of the impact of migration on development is becoming an increasingly more important task, also due to the feminization of migration and the growing reliance of western welfare systems on foreign labour.

As stressed by Ferruccio Pastore, up to now migration and development strategies have been developed as a result of the interaction of two tendencies: the external projection of European **migration policy**, essentially driven by a logic of control and security, and the growing interest of **foreign policy** in international migration as a relevant factor of both international relations and development processes.

Social policy has not yet been included in this interplay. Until now it has been regarded exclusively as belonging to the realm of 'home affairs'. Moreover, the integration of migrants has been considered a factor that weakens the relationship between migration and development. At the same time it is an important part of the external assistance policies but completely without consideration on the effects of female migration and in general of migration on welfare conditions in the countries of origin. This perspective needs to be reviewed. Indeed, the social, political and civil integration of migrants has in many cases proven to increase migrants' commitment to their country of origin; and the reverse linkage is also true. Furthermore, migratory flows have transformed social policies and services both 'over here' and 'over there', and development cooperation can turn this into a positive impact. Finally, well-being is the most transnational good: the sufferance of a child left behind is the sufferance of the same child that joins his mother although we no longer use the term 'left behind' but 'second generation' or '1.5 generation'. Social policy must therefore have an international projection, and it must be considered a crucial aspect of the migration-development nexus.

The analysis of the social consequences of out-migration on the countries of origin helps us to consider this aspect in greater depth.

During our fieldwork we observed how the growing migratory flows, above all that of females, were impacting on all the different levels of the so-called 'care diamond', that is to say the set of actors providing care in every society. These actors are the family, the State, the community, and the market.

Family is probably the most flexible institution, that which transforms itself more deeply in order to cope with the care drain. What is important to stress here is that - regardless of the cultural level of the families and their capability to re-organize themselves - distance is almost always a factor that creates psychological and social distress both for parents abroad and for relatives left behind. In such situations, above all during transition periods, family members, at a transnational level, should have the right to receive psycho-social support. At the same time social services both 'here' and 'there' should be able to interact with this new welfare demand. Transnational cooperation between social services could make this effort more effective.

Within this framework MIDLA is quite a pioneering project. It was carried out by IOM and CeSPI with funds from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project identified NGOs, public and private social services and migrants' associations in several cities of Italy, Ecuador and Peru that were linked by migratory chains. The actors identified had to be interested in setting up new forms of collaboration among themselves in order to set up psycho-social services addressed to

transnational families and communities back home. One of the objectives of the project was to address the more general welfare problems of these countries in order to avoid a discriminatory approach (the internationalisation of the Italian welfare system comprehends the enhancing of Latin American nurses and doctors working in Italy to support health services in Ecuador and Peru – brain gain). This constitutes a pioneering level of partnership in the sense that it brings together actors who are not used to collaborating. Moreover, the attempt to stimulate an international projection by social services is quite promising, and it can contribute to the development of the services involved and to the improvement of social inclusion policies at the transnational level.

The second corner of the care diamond is the state. Also at this level, we can observe a profound social impact as a consequence of out-migration. Some of the main problems to be addressed are: a reduced sustainability of the social security systems due to contributions drain; a greater demand for public care due to the care drain, and consequently to the reduction of informal care; and an increased skill drain from the health and social sector also due to the increase in female emigration. Many states are already enacting new policies to cope with these problems. For example, as far as the care drain is concerned, in Romania, Ecuador and Ukraine, we observed the creation of new legislation aimed at both protecting transnational families, and enforcing and coordinating the social services dealing with children left behind. However, these efforts are still quite weak and should be sustained by development cooperation.

A good example in this regard is the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on migration promoted by the IOM on funds from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Observatory aims at fostering dialogue between national and local institutions in Ukraine and in Italy. It increases awareness on the social effects of female emigration, and promotes the twinning of Italian and Ukrainian local institutions in order to address the identified needs within the framework of decentralised cooperation.

The third corner of the care diamond is the community. In many developing countries this is a very important level, due to the weakness of state and market. In the countries where we run our fieldwork, we observed that many nonprofit organizations are transforming their services in order to address the needs of migrants, children left behind and returnees. An interesting example is a small NGO run by psychologists in L'viv, in Ukraine. For several years this organization has been offering free counseling services to Ukrainian citizens (mainly mothers) who have emigrated to Lisbon. An association of Ukrainians in Lisbon collaborates with the L'viv NGO by offering a free Skype connection and a little training on how to use it. Beneficiaries can speak in their own language with psychologists, and parents with children in L'viv have also the opportunity to triangulate with the family back home. It is a relevant, long-lasting and low-cost service even though it operates on a very small scale.

This is a good example, but in general, programs carried out at the community level are very fragmented and intermittent, and they lack strong methodologies and financial sustainability. In the future one challenge in this domain will be to connect high quality services to the individual and collective remittances: this increases the sustainability of local NGOs and might strengthen the empowerment of groups of parents (above all mothers) who organize themselves so as to orient services back home. A good example in this respect comes from India, where the State does not finance nonprofit organizations but has created a quality certification system aimed at increasing the Diaspora's trust in these organizations and thus attracting remittances.

The last corner of the care diamond is the market. Remittances addressed to social needs are deeply changing the configuration of private welfare. New private schools and universities are appearing, as are private social services for the elderly, and the care market is becoming a new business: not only because of migration but also due to the growth of the middle class. If the local social services market is dynamic, remittances can strengthen it, thus generating new job opportunities as well as

new chances for circular or return migration by women who can use their skills acquired abroad by working in the social sector. However if the offer is weak, remittances will finance low-quality services or they will be used to buy services within the gray or even the black or corrupted welfare market (suffice it to think of the corruption and degeneration of private universities in Ukraine).

The challenge here is to reinforce the local market of welfare. A good practice in this context is a program carried out by the Italian organization CGM, a consortium that comprises about 1,000 Italian social cooperatives, many of which deliver social services. CGM acts by reinforcing the system of social enterprises in the countries of origin, as well as the pertinent legislation. Transnational twinning between social cooperatives in the countries of origin and in Italy are the tool for strengthening the local social enterprises, by creating both new job opportunities and conditions for the circularity of migrants employed in the health and care sector. Italian social cooperatives are indeed also recruiters of foreign labor, and they can foster circulation thanks to their collaboration with their counterparts in the countries of origin.