

**ICEST 2021****II International Conference on Economic and Social Trends for Sustainability of Modern Society****LABOUR MIGRATION IN AFRICA: MANAGEMENT CAPACITY  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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The article examines the peculiarities of labour migration policy in Africa at the continental, regional and national level and its influence on the sustainable development. The process of migration is supported and guided by the joint efforts of African states through the “Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa” and the Action Plan (2018-2027), containing recommendations on migration management for African Union (AU) member states and regional economic communities (RECs). Rapidly increasing intra-African labour migration has the potential to stimulate structural transformation in host countries and accelerate their economic growth. Some advanced RECs, primarily ECOWAS and EAC, need the formalization of free labour movement between member-states. Meanwhile, despite the appropriate agreements, difficulties remain in their practical application due to inconsistencies with national rules. The case studies, such as Kenya, demonstrate the social and economic risks for all participants of intraregional migration process, especially in sectors with low-skilled employment. The sustainable development is becoming the most important task for the African countries, mainly by creating appropriate jobs and raising workers’ qualifications, including migrants.

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## 1. Introduction

Despite the abundant natural and human resources (about 17% of the planet total population), Africa lags sharply behind the global level in terms of the main socio-economic development indicators that determine the population's living standards. Great differences between the countries contribute to the rapid growth of intra-continental labour migration, which accounts for 53% of all African migrants, mostly low-skilled workers. The reasons for labour migration are diverse, but its mainstream factor remains the critical situation in the labour market (high unemployment, underemployment) and the resulting chronic poverty.

The labour migrants' movement in Africa can be attributed to various types of migration (irretrievable, temporary, seasonal, commuting), as well as internal and external. There are some difficulties in their distinction. External (international) migration is a key component of national labour market change. The dynamics of internal migration is indirectly related to various aspects of regional socio-economic development. Therefore, it coordinates with the Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Target 10.7), which calls for "facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people" (Migration in the Sustainable Development Goals, 2015). The intra-African migration management is realized through the implementation of national and regional migration policy (AU revised Migration Policy Framework (MPFA 2018-2030) and Plan of Action, 2021), which encourage member states to integrate migration and development strategy, particularly in their poverty reduction and national development plans (Migration in Kenya: A Country Profile, 2018).

### 1.1. Labour migration in Africa as the object of research and management

In Africa basic human and social needs of the labour immigrants, local workers and employees must be met through the special measures of the economic policy. As a rule, they are co-ordinated with the strategies of key international (ILO, UNCTAD, ECA UN, OECD, IOM), pan-African (African Union, AfDB) organisations, regional African Communities and the national programmes, such as Kenya's Employment Act 2007, Immigration and Citizenship Act 2011, National Employment Authority Act 2016.

Recently, negative assessments of the role of migration, which have prevailed for a long period in the international concepts of Africa's socio-economic development, are giving way to new ideas about its positive impact on economic growth and structural transformation both in migrant outflow and inflow countries. With proper regulation, intra-African labour migration as a driver for economic growth can positively influence the structural transformation of the guest countries' economies as follows:

- promoting trade (including food imports and trade in traditional goods);
- increasing labour productivity in agriculture, construction, mining and manufacturing, services and information technology (IT);
- promoting inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, in particular through migrants' remittances to countries of origin and through taxation and consumption mechanisms to host countries;

- replenishing acute labour shortage in the recipient countries and improving workers' qualifications by transferring knowledge and skills to the countries of origin (UNCTAD, 2018).

African researchers and policymakers consider free movement of people within the continent and labour migration to be the most important factors in creating the united and unified Africa as well as drivers for economic growth and structural transformation. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary to pursue the following strategy:

- harmonization of country and regional policies in the field of migration, trade and investment with long-term development goals;
- pursuing more flexible labour policies to facilitate migrants' mobility and their integration into labour markets;
- providing opportunities for absorbing surplus labour in various sectors of the whole continent's economy.

## **1.2. Migration potential implementation in African states**

Intra-regional migration' formation is becoming the most important task for the African countries, primarily by raising workers' skills and creating appropriate jobs that meet the needs of economic development (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Migration influence on socio-economic development

Arguments for the migration potential use:	Arguments against the migration potential use:
1. The government is interested in the immigrants' labour force use, as in the long run this brings profit to the economy (for example, in large infrastructure facilities construction).	1. Growth of the informal sector activity parallel to the local unemployment rise (due to the fact, that migrants as a cheaper labor force crowd out local residents, depriving them of their earnings).
2. Private companies pay more taxes to the state and wages to workers. The state receives tax revenues. As a result, it should develop and implement social programs.	2. Different forms of labour immigrants' discrimination (especially, social services absence, such as medicine, education, housing etc.).
3. The informal sector enterprises can be transformed into legal form and pay official taxes to the state.	3. Young immigrants' unemployment, many of whom are NEETS (according to OECD: no education, employment, training, skills), negatively affects the state of society as a whole, leading, in particular, to the increase in the level of youth crime.
4. Migrants' employment allows them to transfer earned money to their homeland, which supports their families and at the same time replenishes budget revenues.	4. The negative attitude of many African governments towards immigrants (both illegal and legalized migrants).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The subject of the study is the socio-economic effects of labour migration as a factor of African economies' sustainable development. Nowadays, some advanced RECs, primarily ECOWAS and EAC,

have reached a relatively high degree of trade, monetary, administrative and economic internal ties. Currently, these Communities are at the stage of common market formation, which implies the free trans-border movement of labour resources. The main problems of intra-regional migration management and labour market formation in RECs are border regulation, collection of migration data, issues of "mixed" migration, rules for the return and reintegration of migrants, overcoming illegal labour migration, and in the future - implementation of Regional Migration Policy agreed by the Communities' Member States (ECOWAS Region, 2010; Morozenskaya, 2020).

Migration management at national level faces some actual issues, which demands solving. The analysis of Kenyan case based on recent documents and publications shows the necessity of more comprehensive studies of such urgent challenges for Kenyan citizens as national government regulation of internal migration; migration as one of the main factors of fast urban population growing; the low quality of life in urban informal settlements

### **3. Research Questions**

In the course of the study the following questions have been raised:

- What kind of state migration policy is implemented in African countries?
- Does the intra-African labour migration influence the process of economic integration?
- Could the migration management ensure sustainable development in countries-recipients?
- What is the role of the African state in ensuring the social conditions for labour immigrants?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to justify the directions for the practical implementation of national and intra-regional migration programs as a factor in the sustainable development of African economies. The case of Kenya shows that being a member of the East African Community Kenya joined Common Market Protocol 2010, which defines member states' free movement across regional borders and access to each country's labour market. The study of the labour migration data which is available online with the help of Kenya's Labour Market Information System (Migration in Kenya: A Country Profile, 2018) provides analysis on labour supply and demand.

### **5. Research Methods**

The methodological base of this study includes:

- the classification of the forms and peculiarities of intra-African migration potential;
- the definition of migration management possibilities according to the theoretical base and current programs of African states and leading international organizations;
- economic analysis of the statistics and factors affecting internal migration process and the ways of its management by the national government (case of Kenya).

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Analysis of the labour migration phenomenon

The enormity of unemployment, informal employment (89%) and extreme poverty (36%) among workers in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is the largest in the world (ILO, 2020). Most African migrants (more than 21 million in 2019) move within the continent (in SSA - more than 80%), mainly to neighbouring, less poor states (IOM, 2020). These processes are most active in East and West Africa (8 and 7.5 million, respectively) (UNCTAD, 2018, p. 2-17).

Major recipient countries of the workforce in Africa: South Africa, Cote d'Ivoire, Uganda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya, as well as Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Tanzania, Republic of Congo, Ghana, Rwanda. Major supplying countries of unskilled labour: Benin, Burundi, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo, Chad, CAR, Mauritania.

Permanent or seasonal demand for migrant labour by industry:

- for low-skilled migrants - agriculture (Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa), domestic services sector (Mauritania, South Africa), informal cross-border trade (SSA countries);
- for semi-skilled labour - the sectors of high-value agriculture, mining (Gabon, South Africa), construction (Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa), the service sector (East and South Africa);
- for highly qualified workers - education (Rwanda), engineering and technical services (Rwanda), financial services (Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, Mauritius), in the IT sector (Rwanda, South Africa, Mauritius) (IOM, 2020, pp. 19-20, 82-85; Kalinichenko, 2020).

The most massive movement of people on the continent is permanent or temporary migration of the so-called surplus rural population into the city (Table 2). About 60% of them are people of working age, mostly men, most often settle in the informal sphere of small-scale trade and services, since in the modern sector (manufacturing and services) only 5-10% of new jobs are created.

**Table 2.** Characteristics of internal migration

Types of internal migration	Factors of internal migration
Rural-rural	Search for pastures, arable land (nomadism and pastoralism), trade of agricultural production, search for jobs in plantations, farms, mines; cultural relationship between communities
Rural-urban	Search for better living conditions, health facilities, employment, higher incomes, social ecosystems, getting education; environmental problems, shortage of land, family ties
Urban-urban	Search for better working opportunities, starting new business; joining relatives

The Kenyan Government, for example, try to provide effective management for sustainable urbanization, integrating rural and urban territories. Kenya's urban population increased in the period of 1970–2020 from 1.2 million to nearly 15 million. The process of migration is one of the main factors of

urbanization growth in Kenya. The Government follows the strategy of reshaping migration flows from large urban cities to not so big towns in order to regulate the population density and infrastructure pressure. As a result, small and medium-sized towns demonstrate sustainable upward growing trend. It is also important as urbanization influences land-use management especially in peri-urban areas. Nairobi, the capital of the country, concentrates 19% of all urban population, followed by Mombasa, Nakuru, Eldoret and Kisumu. Cities' authorities have to solve the problem of informal settlements, which comprise part of the urban citizens mainly in large cities, who have practically no access to safe water, sanitation facilities, adequate housing or social security. The National Spatial Plan and such tools as metropolitan investment plans for 11 cities will help to overcome this challenge. One of the most important targets of counties' authorities is to reduce the number of people living below the poverty line by implementing different instruments including migration management policy (Migration in Kenya: A Country Profile, 2018).

## **6.2. Migration policy in Africa**

The directions of internal labour migration are influenced by the programs aiming to ensure population's employment and economy revival. For example, the placement in rural areas of plantations, mines and other businesses, that provide employment opportunities, stimulates rural-rural migration (in Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon). In most African countries the main flow of migration is directed to the capital where public and private investments are concentrated. For young people this is often associated with the possibility of obtaining vocational education. As the service sector expands, the share of female migration increases. The rural-to-urban migration of the early stages of urbanization is being replaced by the urban-to-urban migration, especially in more developed countries of West Africa. Accordingly, government measures to regulate migrants' influx and solve their social problems are focused on the development of either recipient cities or rural areas (Adepoju, 2021).

In the first case, the following measures are applied:

- control over the influx of migrants (South Africa) up to their forced return to the village (Mozambique);
- dispersive urbanization (Nigeria);
- intensification of regional development and the creation of small towns (Zambia, Algeria);
- construction of new capitals (Nigeria, Tanzania).

A number of states (Tanzania, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire) are implementing programs to reduce rural migration by:

- increasing income from farming;
- laying of new plantations;
- creating additional jobs in rural areas;
- improving the living conditions of peasants (utilities, healthcare, IT);
- supporting certain branches of the agricultural industry and crafts;
- stimulating the development of non-core activities for villagers.

The success of the national migration policy is determined by various socio-political and socio-economic factors, including the effectiveness of public administration in general, the implementation of government measures to support the labour market, stimulate private and public investment in priority projects (Abramova, 2009; Gromova, 2008; Matsenko, 2019).

Inter-African migration carries certain risks for all participants in economic relations.

Social risks:

- an increase in the shadow sector;
- an increase in unemployment among local residents;
- various forms of discrimination against migrants;
- the lack of rights for migrants to receive social services (medical, educational, etc.), especially necessary during periods of crises (including epidemics).

Economic risks:

- inability or unwillingness of the host country to use migrants' professional qualifications, to invest in human capital;
- insufficient elaboration of the general system of diplomas and levels of professional qualifications recognition in African countries and high costs of obtaining work permits, which limit highly qualified migrants' mobility;
- the lack of job security for seasonal and low-paid work at small enterprises in the informal sector;
- primary jobs cutting in the formal sector where migrants usually work (construction, manufacturing, hotel business, travel services) during crisis;
- limiting migrants' access to production resources (loans, technologies, information, land plots and other assets necessary for carrying out economic activities).

## **7. Conclusion**

The labour migration in Africa as an objective economic process has direct and indirect impact on a number of social problems in recipient countries and their economic potential. Implementation of the migration policy framework for Africa includes certain national and regional programs, which propose the creation of socio-economic conditions and appropriate governance for reducing the negative consequences of irregular migration aiming the sustainable development of African economies. The discussion concerns not the migration reduction but its inclusion in the national, regional and continental socio-economic strategies. This requires coordinated migration, trade and investment policies at all levels with long-term development goals; allocating sufficient resources to meet the challenges of structural transformation in Africa; efficient use of remittances and diaspora investment in production activities, etc. An important role is also played by the implementation of more flexible policies to facilitate migrants' mobility and their integration into labour markets (UNCTAD, 2018). The findings of the study on methods of implementing

national, regional and interregional migration programs are of practical interest for use in countries with economies in transition for their achieving sustainable development.

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